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Fourth Regional Workshop on “Migration Policy in the Western Balkans”

Focus: Participation of and Cooperation with Migrants
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List of Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BHdiaFor	Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora Business Forum
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CIM	Centre for International Migration and Development
DDI	Diaspora Direct Investments
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IDEAL	Integrative Deutsch-Albanische Gesellschaft e.V.
KWKD	Kroatischer Weltkongress in Deutschland e.V.
SP	Sector Project (CIM)
ZSD	Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V.



1| Executive Summary

From May 26th to May 28th 2014 the fourth Regional Workshop on “Migration Policy in the Western Balkans” was held on behalf of the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Berlin, Germany. The workshop was organized in partnership with Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland (ZSD) e.V., Kroatischer Weltkongress in Deutschland (KWKD) e.V., Bundesdachverband Merhamet Deutschland e.V. and Integrative Deutsch-Albanische Gesellschaft (IDEAL) e.V. The workshop brought together around 70 national and local government officials for a peer-to-peer exchange, as well as representatives of the European Diaspora of the Western Balkans and other relevant stakeholders for meaningful discussions and dialogue.

The main objective of the Fourth Regional Workshop was to **strengthen the governmental institutions responsible for migration and Diaspora policies** by offering a regional platform for dialogue, exchange of experiences and good practices. Moreover, an atmosphere of trust was fostered where issues, regarding participation of and cooperation with migrants from the Western Balkans could be discussed and a mutually beneficial link with the Diaspora could be created.

The following were the objectives of the workshop:

- Initiate a sustainable and mutually beneficial dialogue between representatives of governmental institutions and the European Diaspora of the Western Balkans,
- Familiarize the workshop participants with new options and tools for promoting participation of migrants and for facilitating Diaspora involvement,
- Recognize migrant organizations as key actors and development partners
- Establish an informal network on migration and development in the region with the joining of the European Diaspora of the Western Balkans.

The workshop focused on three main issues: engagement, dialogue and perspectives and was organized as follows:

Monday, 26th May 2014 was the day of engagement, emphasizing the relevance of Diaspora activities and migrants' involvement in the development of their country of origin,

Tuesday, 27th May 2014 was the day of dialogue, highlighting new options and tools to promote dialogue with and participation of migrants,

Wednesday, 28th May 2014 was the day of perspectives, outlining country specific road maps as framework for sustainable and mutually beneficial Diaspora dialogues.

This approach facilitated the implementation of the above mentioned objectives and the following outcomes were achieved:

- ① Country specific and joint perspectives on cooperation between Diaspora and country of origin were developed, enabling the future implementation of practical projects and cooperative measures.
- ② New options and tools for promoting participation of migrants and facilitating Diaspora involvement were introduced.
- ③ Migrant organizations were recognized as key actors and strategic partners in development policy.

In summary, the fourth regional workshop emphasized on the **importance of regional cooperation and joint projects in the context of migration and Diaspora policy** and furthermore fostered the informal network on migration and development in the region. The governmental and Diaspora participants agreed on the relevance of mutual beneficial relations and voted for the continuation of an impact oriented dialogue.

Following this workshop, concrete advisory requests have emerged to support partner governments in designing and developing Diaspora relations.



2 | Background and Context

Point of departure

Migration has a long standing tradition in the Western Balkan region. First approaches towards a migration policy had been made by the Yugoslav government and were continued later by the newly constituted national governments. They put a particular focus on actively fostering the ties to Diasporas by consulates, i.e. through regular meetings with Diasporas, information sharing, linguistic and cultural events.

Over the last couple of years the migration issue has gained importance in the region, especially due to ongoing labor migration to the EU on the one hand and increasing intra-regional migration movements on the other. Both will affect the planned eastward enlargement of the European Union (e.g. in the formulation of migration policies). In most countries of the Western Balkans, there are organizational units responsible for migration and Diaspora issues, but which are assigned to very different institutions, such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Labor or of Human Rights and Refugees. This requires clear responsibilities and inter-departmental coordination as well as coherent strategies on how to approach and maintain sustainable relationships with the Diasporas. Hence, a lot of different ideas and experiences exist in the respective countries regarding the coordination of migration management and Diaspora engagement.

Nevertheless, the good practices that can be found in the region are not yet well disseminated. The same applies to the well perceived potentials of migrants that could be better used for the development of their country of origin (core problem).

Currently, about 4.5 million people from the Western Balkans are living outside their country of origin and still maintain close ties to these countries. Through knowledge and technology transfer, investments and other financial contributions, the mobilization of networks and contacts, these migrants are able to promote innovation and development processes in their countries of origin.

Past activities in the context of migration policy advice

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) the CIM Sector Project (SP) “Migration and Development” has developed concepts and tools to enhance the positive effects of migration, to contribute to risk reduction, and to mainstream the migration and development nexus.

The SP’s main thematic areas are: Remittances, Private Sector Development through Migration, Cooperation with and Support of Diasporas, Development-oriented Labor Mobility and Migration Policy Advice.

Recognizing the importance of tracking migration in the Western Balkans, in 2009 and 2010 the SP commissioned the drafting of migration policy checklists for the countries in the region in order to gather comparable data and background information on the regional characteristics of migration.

Considering the above mentioned core problem, the SP “Migration and Development” and GIZ offices in the Western Balkans initiated a regional series of workshops on development-oriented migration policy. The overall objective of these workshops is to **strengthen national institutions responsible for migration policy and to encourage and facilitate regional cooperation**.

Therefore, the GIZ promoted a regional platform for discussion, exchange of experiences and good practices and started with the **first workshop** on “Migration policy in the Western Balkans” in Pržno, Montenegro on 24th–25th November 2010. The workshop attracted a lot of interest among the invited stakeholders who voted for the continuation of this measure. The central recommendation of the participants was to pool regional resources, to scale up the regional exchange of experiences and thus promote mutual learning.

The following topics were identified as particularly relevant:

- ① Development and implementation of national migration strategies,
- ② Institutional setting (in particular harmonization and coordination between the institutions responsible for migration and development),
- ③ Dialogue, participation and cooperation with the Diaspora, and
- ④ The legal framework of regional labor migration in the Western Balkans.

As a result, the SP in cooperation with the supranational organization MARRI (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative) organized a **second workshop** in Skopje, Macedonia on 14th-15th November 2011. The aim of this second event was to promote a regional policy dialogue on the development and implementation of coherent migration strategies. Representatives of relevant institutions in the region had the opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt regarding the specific driving factors leading to the development of national migration strategies. One important conclusion of the workshop was the discovery that greater institutional coherence and cooperation among the main stakeholders are required to successfully implement migration and Diaspora strategies and for all parties to gain more from migration.

The main findings of this second event were included in the “Analysis of Migration Strategies in Selected Countries” which the SP published April 2012. The results of this analysis are an aid to designing specific advisory services, supporting partner governments in developing and optimizing coherent migration strategies, as well as selecting appropriate implementation measures.

Due to the kind invitation from the Department for Diaspora of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina (MHRR), the **third workshop** took place on 22nd-23rd October 2012 in Sarajevo. The event was aligned with the objectives of the Strategy of Migration and Asylum of BiH 2012-2015, which envisages strengthening institutional capacities to provide for linking of migration with development.

The main objective of this third event was to **strengthen the national institutions in charge of Diaspora Policy, to promote a regional dialogue and to encourage institutional coherence and coordination at various levels.**

For the first time, representatives from governmental and non-governmental institutions of the Western Balkans and representatives of migrant organizations discussed roles and responsibilities of different actors in the context of migration and Diaspora policies on a regional level. The discussions emphasized the **increasing importance of regional cooperation** between representatives of governmental institutions as well with the Diasporas of the Western Balkans.

Focus and design of the fourth regional workshop

The **fourth Regional Workshop** on “Migration Policy in the Western Balkans” focused on participation of and cooperation with migrants from the Western Balkans.

In recent years, migrants have increasingly come to be recognized as valuable actors offering important resources for the economic and social development of countries of origin. Successful migration management not only involves coordinating work across different areas of government and a coherent migration policy strategy, but also dialogue with and involvement of migrants.

Governments need to communicate effectively with migrants in order to encourage them to use the financial, knowledge, labor, social and cultural capital at their disposal for the benefit of their countries of origin. For this to be successful it is important that policy-makers are familiar with the interests and needs of the Diaspora and that they respond to these by providing appropriate services. A needs-centered and migrant-centered approach based on transparency and trust is essential for **creating a mutually beneficial relationship with the Diaspora**. In addition, well-organized Diasporas (for instance, those that form Diaspora umbrella-associations) develop a desire to participate in designing migration and Diaspora policies.





3 | Engagement for Development

The first day of the workshop emphasized on the relevance of Diaspora activities and migrants' involvement in the development of their country of origin.

» a. Relevance of a migrant-centered approach for successful Diaspora dialogue

Mr. Kingsley Aikins, Founder of and CEO at **Diaspora Matters**, was invited to give a Key Note-Speech on the relevance of a migrant-centered approach for successful Diaspora dialogue. Mr. Aikins highlighted the **importance of including networking strategies into migration and Diaspora policy**.

In the past, migrants left their countries in difficult conditions but today, their children and grandchildren are in successful positions and they are connecting back. Diaspora is no longer seen as lost actors but as a national asset. Diasporas provide remittances, philanthropy, business networks, venture capital and deep engagement and get more active, more participative economically, socially, culturally and politically.

Today people live dual lives, totally committed and loyal to the country they live in, but passionately engaged with their country of origin, ancestry or affinity. Diasporas are international global networks that can be a key factor in facing the big challenges of our time. *The Economist* (2011) titled *The magic of Diaspora* referring to the economic force of Diasporas and how migrant business networks can change the world. The important finding is that **Diasporas really matter**.

Furthermore, the importance of networks is being emphasized by Anne-Marie Slaughters (Princeton University) theory that the information age is over and we now live in the **network age**, and in the network age the **measurement of power is connectedness**. People are interacting in business and lots of other different categories. The vertical world of hierarchies has been replaced by the horizontal world of networks. It's all about "**connected clusters of creative people**". Through their Diaspora, countries can make themselves a junction point in global commerce and trade. In these networks **Diaspora's role is soft power**. While hard power is military and economic issues, soft power is about **the power of attraction**. Diasporas contribute soft power but through this soft power hard impacts and changes can be achieved.



Mr. Aikins provided examples of countries that have benefited from engaging their Diaspora and furthermore asked four important questions:

- What helped bring peace to **Northern Ireland**?
- What made **Israel** a start-up nation?
- What made **China** a manufacturing giant?
- What made **India** a global technology hub?

The answer to all of these questions is, as Mr. Aikins puts it, **networking their Diaspora**. These examples show that the **fundamental skill to develop successful migrant organizations is to teach to become world class networkers** consequently creating a 'Diaspora Capital'. Diaspora Capital refers to the resources available to a country, region, city or location and is made up of people, networks, finance, ideas, attitudes and concerns for their place of origin, ancestry or affinity.

To create and strengthen Diaspora Direct Investments (DDI) it is necessary to identify the people within a Diaspora who can make the change. It is not only about the quantity of people but also about identifying influential individuals within the Diaspora as a whole; such as the "Rockstar" business figures, those who are in positions where they can engage businesses and drive investments back and create jobs in their countries of origin. In summary, the future, as Mr. Aikins suggests, is to **diasporise and democratize**. To diasporise means that every organization and government needs to understand how important their Diaspora is and engage them in a democratic process.





» b. Diaspora 2.0 – From the individual subject to organized actors and development partners

In a panel discussion, representatives of various organizations discussed their perspectives on the recent changes in Diaspora policy. While before migrants were seen only as individual subjects, they are now perceived as **organized actors and development partners**.

- The perspective of the German government by Mr. Stephan Bethe, Head of Division of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ),
- The international networking perspective by Mr. Kingsley Aikins, Founder of and CEO at Diaspora Matters,
- The practical perspective of a Serbian migrant organization by Mr. Milan Čobanov, Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V.,
- The practical perspective of a Croatian migrant organization by Mr. Mijo Marić, Chairman of the Broad of the Croatian World Congress

The perspective of the German government

The migration-paradigm has changed some time ago: There is a wide consensus that migration can be beneficial for all parties involved, the countries of origin and destination and the migrants themselves. And, most importantly migrants are not seen any longer as lost subjects but as actors who can directly influence the positive development of their countries of origin. The German government considers migrants as important agents of development and partners in development cooperation, not only because they realize small scale development projects and send financial and social remittances, transfer innovation and knowledge from abroad back to their countries of origin, but also because they build bridges between their countries of origin and destination. Furthermore, well-organized Diasporas with high-qualified migrants are able and willing to be involved in migration management as experts and facilitators. A structured dialogue with Diasporas and the possibility to participate in designing migration and Diaspora policies encourage a stronger engagement of migrants and lead to sustainable development effects. This message was also part of the German statement at the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development October 2013 in New York.



German development policy intends to assist its partner countries to harness the positive potentials offered by migration and reduce its risks while taking into account the needs and rights and potentials of migrants. In this context various instruments on migration for development were initiated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). For instance, CIM, on behalf of the BMZ, supports migrant organizations in their efforts to implement development oriented projects in their countries of origin and supports **returning experts to ensure knowledge transfer**. Furthermore, CIM provides migration **policy advice** assisting partner countries in making use of the full potential of migration and Diaspora.

In addition, the Croatian World Congress works to **preserve Croatian identity** and to make sure that migrants don't get estranged from their country of origin. This does not mean that there should be competition between their relationships with both countries, but migrants can be completely loyal to the countries they live in while also engaged with their country of origin.



The perspective of a croatian migrant organization

The organized Croatian Diaspora provides a wide range of important services to their country of origin, for example, **humanitarian and philanthropic** activities in cases of emergency assistance. In this area the Croatian Diaspora is cooperating with various organizations such as the Catholic Church. Furthermore, by sending **remittances** via both formal and informal channels, migrants provide a huge monetary assistance to their country of origin. Recognizing these potentials, the Croatian World Congress facilitates business contacts between Croatia and Germany to **strengthen the economic partnership** between these two countries. Another project is to collect data and **build up a network** of Croatians all over the world.

The perspective of a serbian migrant organization

There has been an increasing shift in the objectives of migrant organizations in recent years. While migrants organized themselves before mainly for folkloric reasons, such as speaking their first languages, listen to music or celebrate national holidays, nowadays, the focal point of migrant organizations is no longer only towards the country migrants come from but also on the country they are living in. Therefore, migrant associations devote their initiatives towards both directions. Thus, they aim to:

- ① Achieve **more political, economic and social influence** in their countries of origin and **be recognized as development partners** by their governments,
- ② **Represent their interests as migrants in the host countries** and gain political influence.



One of the core issues of migrant organizations today is therefore to **meet and represent the diverse and complex interests and needs of their members**, as Diaspora is not a homogeneous group. This requires migrant organizations to be flexible and to adjust their initiatives to the changing focus of those they are representing.

An important finding is that a Diaspora can only serve their countries of origin if they are successful in the receiving countries. People who are struggling with problems of everyday life will not have free resources to serve their countries of origin. Being successful includes being well integrated in the receiving society, attaining high educational level which in turn would make knowledge transfer possible as well as to be economically successful to invest in their countries of origin.

Furthermore, the media should play an integral and active role in representing the voices and needs of the Diaspora. In other words **only a successful Diaspora can be successful in their country of origin**.

The international networking perspective

Mr. Aikins suggested that governments have two options concerning their role in regulating Diaspora engagement. **1. Governments can be implementers or; 2. facilitators.** When the market doesn't deliver institutions, organizations or structures, then the governments have to intervene and put these in place or strengthen the institutions and the cooperation. But the **desired solution would be a hybrid**, with governments doing only certain things and private organizations doing lots of things. In other words, **the best role of the government is to be a facilitator**, but if the market doesn't deliver, they have to intervene.

Getting to know their Diaspora is one of the main objectives of Governments today. People are concerned about data and data protection and building big data bases of Diaspora as there is no clear definition on who is going to use or abuse it and for what purpose. **The big questions about Diaspora are: a. who are they; b. where are they and; c. what are they doing.** Moreover, most countries don't have sufficient answers to the above questions about their Diaspora. There is also no data broken down by different constituencies, yet this is important as countries do not have only one Diaspora, they have many Diasporas and these are all very different and need to be treated in different ways with different strategies. This requires governments to be very flexible and understanding in their concepts and designs of the programs that they carry out.

However, not all Diaspora strategies are successful which begs the question: **why do Diaspora initiatives fail?** The reasons are diverse: migrant organizations are poorly funded, voluntarily run, poor governance, can be dominated by very strong individuals, they can have a political agenda that they are pushing and they can be run by people who do not move on, and consequently fall out of touch with the current developments in the countries of origin and thus no longer represent the development agenda. To be successful, **Governments can build the framework and the network**, they can connect over-achievers in countries of origin with over-achievers in receiving countries and then step back and let the stakeholders do their work and see great things happen. Here again, the role of the government is to be a facilitator.







» c. Best practice on Diaspora initiatives

Six examples of best practice on Diaspora initiatives to foster development on local, regional and national level in countries of origin were presented in form of a marketplace session by European Diaspora representatives of the Western Balkans.

Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora Business Forum (BHdiaFor) – Mr. Sanel Jakupović



The main objective of the 2010 founded initiative is to foster an investment friendly environment that appeals and attracts investments from and by members of the Diaspora of Bosnia and Herzegovina by promoting the region as a favorable investment destination. To strengthen the economic development and increase the living standards of citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the **BHdiaFor focuses on investments, business cooperation, as well as remittances and savings**. Furthermore, activities on social development such as fostering knowledge transfer, volunteerism, philanthropy and research are considered.

The **first Diaspora Business Forum** was held in 2013 in Prijedor, BiH and was the first of its kind in the region. The event was organized by the NGO Naša Perspektiva/Our Perspective and its partners City of Prijedor, Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH, and the World Diaspora Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC). More than 3,000 participants attended the forum, 40 percent of them were potential investors and business people from twenty countries. During the event, Diaspora members got information about the support instruments that are at their disposal in order to make investments and establish business cooperation in BiH and **best practice examples of successful investments** in the region were presented.

The **second Diaspora Business forum** will take place in August 2014 in Sarajevo. The main objectives of the event are to focus on 1. **remittances and savings** - a Diaspora development and investment fund will be established, 2. **education** - a curriculum on Migration and Development will be introduced, and 3. **research** - an international conference on migration, education and development will be organized and a center for research on migration and development is planned to be established.

Lifelong Learning Program, Croatia - Ms. Antonija Džaja and Ms. Marina Soldo

The “**Lifelong Learning Program**” of the **Croatian Business Association in Germany** is an EU funded project for education and mobility conducted by the city of Zagreb, Croatia. The target group of the project are unemployed people from Croatia.



The idea behind is that young, well educated people struggle to get work experiences in Croatia, but work experience is a crucial factor in finding jobs. Therefore, the project brings around 80 people every year to Germany to do a two month internship program in different sectors. Thus, participants gain **practical knowledge, work experience, language skills and business contacts** and this may well increase their **job prospects both in Croatia or Germany**. The program started in 2009 and the funding phase ends in 2014. The project works in cooperation with different companies across different sectors to find open positions for the prospective interneers and covers basic costs of travel and accommodation.



Integrative Deutsch-Albanische Gesellschaft (IDEAL) e.V. - Ms. Anduena Stephan

IDEAL, the Integrative German-Albanian Association is a unification of German-Albanian associations, institutions and common people. Being a non-profit organization, the **main aim of IDEAL is to improve the bilateral relations by increasing the cooperation in four areas: integration, economy, culture and society.** The organization aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among individuals, institutions and companies to improve dialogue and relations among the citizens of both countries. The idea behind is that Diasporas can function as a bridge between home and host countries by lobbying for the countries of origin.

IDEAL organized a Dialogue Day in 2013 in Essen, Germany, to initiate new and deepen existing cooperation and exchanges between entrepreneurs in Albania, Western Macedonia, Kosovo and Germany. The event's aim was to **initiate cooperation among people, institutions and companies on socio-cultural and economic projects.** In particular the dialogue between the Diaspora and institutions involved in the integration and mobilization of Diaspora in the countries of origin and destination was deepened by this event. Furthermore, a dialogue between the countries of origin and the German State North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) was fostered with the mediation of the Diaspora. Moreover, it was made possible to present the countries of origin through a **product and services fair** enabled and organized by the Diaspora. About 160 participants attended this event representing German, Albanian, Kosovan, and Macedonian Institutions, among them Diaspora representatives and business people. The Dialogue Day was organized in collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Tirana and Essen. It aroused the interest of many businesses, Albanian and German based, and enjoyed the kind support of CIM and GIZ (on behalf of the BMZ) as well as various Investment Promotion Agencies. Furthermore, this activity was supported by the Ministries of Economy in NRW, Albania and Kosovo.



Serbian City Club, London - Ms. Natasha Kocsis

The Serbian City Club (SCC) is an independent and non-political organization with **the objective of supporting and nurturing the interest of Serbian professionals** in the UK and abroad. The initiative was formed in the late 1990s with the aim of connecting and gathering Serbian professionals that live and work in the UK. Currently the Serbian City Club has over 1,650 members including scientists, medical professionals, finance experts, engineers, academics, civil servants and artists. The Club is active in various initiatives such as lobbying the Serbian institutions, organizing monthly events in London and Belgrade aiming to spread the network further as well as business trips to Serbia to promote the Club's agenda. Furthermore, they built a strategic partnership with the companies and institutions in Serbia and the UK.



The best practice initiative presented at the marketplace is the **project for recognition of diploma** that is conducted in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions in the UK and Serbia. SCC believes that faster and more efficient recognition of diplomas is one of the basic systematic solutions the Serbian government should implement in order to facilitate the return of highly educated and skilled professionals to Serbia. SCC also believes that such an action would contribute to the creation of a more competitive domestic labor market, which would, in turn, attract the most qualified professionals. To this end, SCC conducted extensive research in Serbia in 2012 trying to understand the current process and find solutions that would facilitate the necessary changes. The project report was the basis for a public hearing on foreign diploma recognition at the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in March 2013.





The hearing attracted national media coverage and initiated further discussion at parliamentary level. SCC recognizes that the issue cannot be resolved without the support of universities and other educational bodies, as they are currently in charge of the due legal process. Therefore, SCC is organizing a Round Table discussion, with the support and endorsement of the University of Belgrade Law Faculty, with representatives from all Serbian (state and private) universities as well as government representatives. In addition, SCC participates in national and international conferences and round tables on the subject.

Youth Ambassador Serbia - Mr. Ivan Petrović

The “Youth Ambassador Serbia” Project aims to engage numerous members of the young Serbian Diaspora to **promote Serbian tourism** by using innovative ways. The project encourages members of the Diaspora to inform friends and acquaintances about main touristic events and destinations in Serbia. To gain publicity, the Youth Ambassador Serbia Project makes use of new media tools.



The idea is that members of the Serbian Diaspora upload pictures of themselves with the banner “My next stop: Serbia” on social networks. The message can be spread widely in an easy and effective way. The general objectives of the project are 1. to promote Serbia as a destination for youth tourism among young people in the world, 2. to mobilize youth Diaspora for promoting Serbia as tourism destination for youth, 3. to deconstruct prejudices about Serbia and the region and, 4. to establish personal relations among Serbian youth and their peers from all over the world. The project built partnerships with various organizations and institutions such as the National Tourism Organization of Serbia, the Government’s Office for Cooperation with Diaspora, migrant associations, Work and Travel groups and student organizations.

Bundesdachverband Merhamet Deutschland e.V. - Ms. A. Bieber and Mr. I. Salihović

Bundesdachverband Merhamet Deutschland e.V. is a humanitarian organization. The parent organization was founded 100 years ago in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the German affiliate 10 years ago in Bonn. The organization focuses on emergency relief and sustainable projects that help people to secure their living not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but in different regions all over the world. The help is provided without regard to race, color, sex or religion. The focus of the projects is on sustainability and to support people to **make use of the existing resources**.



The best practice initiative presented at the marketplace was the “**Solar energy - energy of life**” Project. The project focusses on the construction of solar dryers to **improve the livelihoods for returnees and people with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Alternative energy is promoted as a measure to create employment and entrepreneurship for people with disabilities and displaced persons. The background of the initiative is that displaced people returning to their homes live in very poor conditions as the social infrastructure as well as labor and electricity are lacking. In order to improve their living conditions, new tools that allow better processing of agricultural resources (fruits, vegetables, herbs) are needed to place natural products on the market. The other target group, people with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has limited access to education and the labor market and thus builds a high unemployment rate.





The project addresses the mentioned obstacles and teaches returnees and disabled people to build devices and maintain them. Thereby it provides **education, knowledge transfer, and labor by offering one year contracts including medical insurance**. Furthermore, the awareness of new technologies is strengthened, knowledge about food production with solar systems is provided and business cooperation with eco-friendly markets is improved.

Conclusion

The six examples of best practice on Diaspora initiatives showed different ways of how to foster development on local, national and regional level.

Initially the projects were started by and within the Diaspora communities out of their own pooled resources. These initiatives by the Diaspora have since showed potential within the Diaspora and, consequently, attracted the attention of governments, institutional cooperation and support from their countries of origin. The **main objectives of Diaspora initiatives are: business cooperation and investment, philanthropy, knowledge transfer and creating skills**. All presented initiatives have a local or national focus, consequently **regional cooperation of Diaspora initiatives from the Western Balkans awaits further improvement**. Furthermore, the engagement of migrants in Diaspora projects and initiatives is relatively small compared to the size of the Diasporas of the Western Balkans. It is desirable to **attract more members of Diaspora to engage in their countries of origin**, in relation to individual interests, needs and possibilities.





» d. Cooperation between migrant associations and governmental institutions

In a fishbowl-discussion, representatives from migrant organizations and government representatives discussed on how to improve the cooperation between migrant associations and the governmental institutions in the countries of origin to build a strong partnership. Aspects and questions of the discussion were

- ① the **recognition of Diaspora contributions** can be strengthened;
- ② where **potential for duplicating and scaling-up Diaspora activities** can be identified; and
- ③ how **continuity and sustainability** of cooperation can be ensured.

The **perspective of migrant organizations** was represented by Ms. Amira Bieber, Bundesdachverband Merhamet Deutschland e.V., and Ms. Anduena Stephan, Integrative Deutsch-Albanische Gesellschaft e.V.

The **governmental perspective** was represented by Ms. Ana Judi, head of unit in the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Lorik Pustina, Head of Public Information of the Ministry of Diaspora, Kosovo.



Recognition of diaspora contributions

Mr. Peter Bonin (CIM) stated that Diaspora initiatives live on the high engagement of their members and that there is a “**short way between hands and heart**”. Accordingly he asked whether a cooperation of migrant organizations on a national and regional level wouldn't help to raise the awareness of Diasporas engagement. As an example he stated the partnership of the four migrant organizations in context of the organization of the current fourth Regional Workshop (Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland (ZSD) e.V., Kroatischer Weltkongress in Deutschland (KWKD) e.V., Bundesdachverband Merhamet Deutschland e.V. and Integrative Deutsch-Albanische Gesellschaft (IDEAL) e.V.).





► **Migrant organization's perspective**

Joint interests and goals of migrant organizations provide a valid basis for regional cooperation and networking. The current Regional Workshop is indeed one best-practice example for effective cooperation. Nevertheless, all initiatives of migrant organizations live on the engagement of their members and basic **funding is oftentimes critical**. The success of Diaspora initiatives depends crucially on voluntary and unsalaried work. Following this path, sooner or later organizations face the challenge of ensuring continuity and sustainability of their initiatives. Through professionalization of the organizations work, which need to include a monetary recognition of migrant's engagement; effectiveness and sustainability of Diaspora initiatives could be increased. Hence, migrant organizations engaged in development initiatives try to enlist financial support (in form of structural subsidy) from their countries of origin.

► **Governmental perspective**

Migrants' **engagement is crucial** for Diaspora initiatives which foster the development of countries of origin. To ensure that these efforts are well received, **coherent government policies** targeting the Diaspora are needed. First of all these policies should focus on Governmental-Diaspora-Relations to motivate further Migrants' engagement by deepening the overall recognition of Diaspora contributions. Furthermore, these policies should aim at the promotion of the diverse potential of migrants' engagement.

Continuity and sustainability of cooperation

► **Migrant organization's perspective**

An important factor is that government cooperation with and support of Diaspora initiatives need to be sustainable and should therefore be independent of party politics as to espouse party politics carries the risk that government's focus and support for Diaspora initiatives may change with a change of government. The government's need to recognize and appreciate Diaspora contribution and the interest in cooperation should, therefore, be mutual and not partisan.

► **Governmental perspective**

Migrant organizations with their initiatives support economic and social development and therefore their promotion must be included as strategic objectives in governmental policies. Diaspora policies need to be anchored on a general and comprehensive Diaspora strategy that is not likely to change with a change in government.

Potential for duplicating and scaling-up diaspora activities: regional cooperation

► **Governmental perspective**

There are already similar projects put in place in different countries of the Western Balkans, such as business fora in BiH and Kosovo. A first step for duplicating or scaling-up Diaspora projects would be to identify similarities in initiatives which respond to joint needs, then efforts should be made to link the initiatives to promote mutual learning and to pool resources.

► **Migrant organization's perspective**

A regional perspective would facilitate a mutual learning on a regional level and increase the efficiency of the Diaspora initiatives. To enable this, a best practice platform should be put in place where information on different Diaspora initiatives and projects can be exchanged.



» e. Summary of the Engagement-Day

The Engagement-Day of the workshop highlighted the awareness that **Diaspora really matters**. In a globalized world **networking** is the key issue. Therefore, the power of Diaspora comes from its **connectedness**.

The main characteristics of Diaspora today are that people connect and remain connected in the receiving and the country of origin, they **interact in global networks**. Therefore, Diasporas are considered as “connected clusters of creative people” (Mr. Aikins). Diaspora is a mass issue, however, “rockstars”, that is, individuals of influence within the Diaspora who can effect and make real change, can be identified.

Nevertheless, there are still critical issues within Diaspora policy such as the **role of the governments**, the **need for a common language**, the issue of **how to organize participation**, need for **continuity** of programs, structures and attracting and engaging the **media** in the process to promote the network and the Diaspora. Likewise, there is need for a **regional cooperation** of the Western Balkan countries in Migration- and Diaspora policies. Furthermore, channels for interaction between migrant organizations and governments need to be strengthened. Events with a regional focus such as this conference have the potential to create and foster strong alliances.



4| Dialogue with and Participation of Migrants

The second day of the workshop focused on exploring practical ways of promoting dialogue between Diasporas and governments of their countries of origin. Good practices, a pilot project and its lessons learnt as well as key issues and major concerns of Diasporas were among the discussions of the workshop.

» a. Good practices from the region

Three examples to showcase approaches and policies to promote dialogue with as well as participation of migrants were presented as good practices of the region.

Political participation of migrants in countries of origin the example of the Croatian Parliament (Sabor)

Mr. Mišo Munivrana from the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Croatian Parliament presented the **parliamentary participation of the Croatian Diaspora in the Croatian Sabor** as a good practice example from Croatia.

In the context of the political processes of the 1990's, an independent Republic of Croatia was formed, together with its democratic institutions, including a multi-party parliament elected at the first free and democratic elections. Delegates were elected from eleven electoral units – ten of them being in Croatia, while the eleventh unit represented the Diaspora.

However, even though the Diaspora was originally allowed fourteen parliamentary seats, they elected only six representatives to the parliament. This was due to a number of reasons but the following two stand out: 1. the majority of Croatians abroad do not have Croatian citizenship; 2. the government provided only a limited number of polls associated to respective diplomatic-consular posts, which are usually very remote from the voters.

Diaspora participation in parliamentary elections remains a challenge. Another reason is that Diaspora voters mostly supported the conservative party, which led its main opposition party to argue that this represents an unfair gain for the party in power. This led to changes in the Croatian constitution just before Croatia became an EU member. Consequently the Diasporas parliamentary representation was effectively reduced to only three seats.

The possibility for Diasporas to participate in elections of their country of origin is clearly a huge step in democratic development. Mr. Munivrana stated that any limitation on this inclusive participatory approach, even when justified by political reasons, would represent a step backwards. He outlined **the way ahead** must be



Within Croatia, there were debates on whether or not Croatians, who do not contribute to the national treasury in form of taxes, should be invited and allowed to vote. However, given close scrutiny, it was ascertained through traces and records of wire and money transfers that Croatians living abroad contribute a far large portion into the national economy a free-flow of tax free money. This made a strong case to support the argument that the Croatian Diaspora should be allowed to participate in the democratic process and matters of governance in their country.

- A **simplification of elections** (including the possibility to vote by post),
- **Enabling dual citizenship in order to strengthen migrants' rights to vote.**
- Moreover, the **Diaspora needs to be included as addressee as well as actor in the political dialogue across all parties.**





A local one-stop-portal for diaspora cooperation the example of the City of Niš, Serbia

Ms. Tamara Ćirić, Head of Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora, presented the **Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora of the city of Niš** as a good practice example from Serbia.

The Office was opened in 2013 as a first of its kind in Serbia. The Office's **objective** is to establish systematic cooperation and networking between the City of Niš and the people who were born in Niš but now live abroad. Accordingly the **target groups** of the Office are the youth in Niš (as potential migrants), the Diaspora of Niš, and returnees to Niš. To accomplish this the Office follows the **strategy** to preserve and strengthen ties between Serbia, the Serbian Diaspora and Serbs in the region by

- ▶ Revoking Diaspora confidence in the country of origin,
- ▶ Improving the position of Diaspora and Serbs in the region,
- ▶ Increasing the public awareness about the importance of the Diaspora and Serbs in the region,
- ▶ Creating networks, and
- ▶ Increasing Diaspora contribution to the Republic of Serbia.

The Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora of the city of Niš has established cooperation with Serbian and international institutions and organizations and runs several projects with focus on capacity building and economic development. For example cooperation in the field of science, education, culture, art and sports were established, strategic planning and research were initiated and data bases were created.

The Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora presents itself as well as modern, customer-oriented service provider, which is proved by the **Virtual Registry for Diaspora**: (see Link: <http://www.eservis.ni.rs/dijasporaweb/iface.aspx>).

This innovative tool to connect with the Diaspora was established by the City of Niš in cooperation with the Regional Development Agency South, and supported by the respective ministry. With this tool, people living outside Serbia are able to acquire documents and certifications much easier.

For further information follow the general Link to Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora of the city of Niš: <http://dijasporanis.com>.

An information and communication platform for diasporas

the example of the website Albinfo.ch

Mr. Bashkim Iseni presented the online platform **Albinfo.ch** as a tool for **Diaspora specific information and communication**.

In Switzerland, there is a huge Balkan Diaspora and the biggest part of it is Albanian speaking. The Diasporas from the Western Balkan states share the same challenges related to the integration in Switzerland and similar problems with their countries of origin. Against this background, it is necessary to think about Diaspora in a transnational framework and to make sure that also the second and third generation of migrants is being reached through Diaspora initiatives.

Albinfo.ch was created as a bottom-up initiative responding to the lack of **depoliticized information between Diaspora, countries of origin and receiving countries**. The objective of the tool is to **facilitate the integration process** of the Western Balkan Diaspora in Switzerland and connect the triangle of Diaspora, Switzerland and countries of origin. It is an initiative from the civil society but supported by the governments of origin and Switzerland. The initiative is supported and funded by the Swiss Institutions Bundesamt für Migration (BFM), Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (DEZA) and Integrationskredit des Bundes (EKM).

The online platform provides **daily news in Albanian, German and French** on issues of the Western Balkan region and Switzerland. The main activities are: dissemination of information on calendars of events; provision of debates on different Balkan related topics in partnership with Swiss Television, cooperation with radio and TV channels in Kosovo, publication of a monthly journal in three languages. By **using online and print media**, Albinfo.ch reaches out to all members of the Diaspora and other interested groups.





» b. Lessons learnt: A web-based dialogue forum

Ms. Marie Prescher, a Consultant on behalf of CIM, presented a summary of the concept, experiences and lessons learnt from a pilot project. The pilot tested the potential for and opportunity of web-based dialogue forums in the context of migration and Diaspora policy and provided best practice guidelines for online dialogue forums.

Potential and limits of web-based dialogue forums

Usually, access to the government of a country of origin remains reserved for a few representatives of migrant organizations. The downside to that is that governments get only limited understanding of the real interests and needs of their respective Diasporas, consequently that impact on their actions.

The main benefit of a dialogue forum is therefore its inclusiveness. Not only selected representatives but the wider public of a Diaspora can engage in dialogue. A cooperative and effective migration management can be created whereby, **needs and concerns of the Diaspora can be identified.** In addition, entering into a dialogue with the Diaspora expresses the government's **recognition of the migrants' role and appreciation of their**

commitment towards their country of origin. This contributes to an atmosphere of transparency and confidence in the elected representatives and sustainable processes of policy-making.

Certainly, there are not only benefits of online dialogue forums but also barriers. First, on a political-strategic level, there might be a **mistrust of citizen in political institutions** as well as a **lack of trust that citizens' participation will be taken seriously.** Moreover, it might be questioned if a **real contribution to policymaking is possible**, particularly when they are made through electronic media. Second, there are socio-economic barriers such as **unequal access to technology and technological literacy** meaning that **not all members of a Diaspora can be reached and included by online media.** Furthermore, there is the possibility of a shortage of necessary **technological infrastructure** resulting in restricted access to the dialogue. Another factor is the general **lack of expertise with the specifics of eParticipation tools**, as this is a relatively new approach.



Framework and implementation of the pilot project

CIM decided to conduct the pilot project with a time frame of six months on the Serbian Diaspora in Germany. However, the approach used and the general results are applicable to other Diasporas.

The **dialogue forum was created** on Alumniportal Deutschland (see Link: <http://www.alumniportal-deutschland.org>), which is a social network designed to promote networking and sharing of information. Next step was to **identify and invite members** of the Serbian Diaspora in Germany to participate in the dialogue. Here, CIM cooperated with ZSD and **sent invitations** via the organizations mailing list. Furthermore, CIM identified existing Serbian online communities within other social networks such as Facebook and invited the members to join the forum. The forum members used different ways of participating in the dialogue such as posting statements or questions on topics that they wanted to discuss. Other members could react on it by **comments** or pressing the **‘like’ button**.

Best practice guidelines for web-based dialogue forums

After six months of testing the concept and platform, CIM took stock and reflected on the results. The turnout of participants was far less than anticipated. However, from the lessons learnt within the pilot project, CIM came out with some best practice guidelines for web-based dialogue forums.

► Approach

Planning a project on participative policy making requires **SMART objectives**. The structures, objectives and approach should be **transparent to the users of the forum**. Furthermore, a dialogue should be held in the language that is most familiar to the users, in order to **avoid language barriers** which would otherwise potentially limit participation.

► Software requirements

It is important to make sure that the platform has **low-threshold access**. Taking this into account it might be a good idea to carry out a dialogue forum on platforms or social networks which are already highly used by the target group. Furthermore, if software is used that is unfamiliar to the participants, measures to ensure that participants are capable of using it should be put in place. Moreover, it might be a good approach to use different **alternative communication channels** at the same time, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders can be included.

► Access to target group

In addition, the **access to the target group** is an essential aspect and requires special attention. It might be useful to **identify multipliers within the target group**, especially if the communication channels between governments and Diaspora are not yet well established.

► Principles for moderation

An ongoing target-oriented and objective moderation by an experienced moderator is crucial. The main issue is to **strike a balance between moderation and restraint** as well as to **ensure compliance with the guidelines** and to intervene in case of inappropriate comments.

► Sustainability

To **ensure sustainability** of the dialogue and its outcomes it is important to pass topics and results on to governments and **consolidate the dialogue** beyond a program's period.



Conclusion

A Web-based dialogue forum is a promising tool to build a strong, inclusive and trustful communication between governments and Diaspora. However, the pilot project showed that there are a number of important factors that need to be considered and fulfilled to conduct a successful and sustainable dialogue.

Another good example of an effective dialogue forum is milosevic.eu (see Link: <http://www.milosevic.eu/>), a web platform for exchange and dissemination of knowledge between Diaspora in Benelux countries.



» c. Key issues and major concerns of the Diaspora to improve relations with countries of origin

In an interview session, the four co-organizers of the workshop reported the key issues of interest of the Western Balkan-Diaspora towards their countries of origin. The main issues refer to **appreciation, communication, cooperation and participation**.

Greater appreciation for diaspora commitment

Mr. Milan Čobanov of Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V. claimed for higher **governmental recognition and appreciation** of Diasporas' contributions for the development of their countries of origin. Migrants engagement and their connection to their countries of origin are rather emotional than rational, but the potential of this commitment is not yet recognized by the governments and Diasporas are not seen as **strategic partners** in cooperation. In order to make Diasporas work more visible, further scientific analysis of their contribution for development should be initiated by countries of origin. To express recognition towards their Diaspora, governments can, for instance, provide **structural re-financing of migrant organizations** and support the professionalization of these associations. Furthermore, Diaspora should be taken into account during state visits as Diaspora representatives can be involved as delegation members of diplomatic missions. In general, a higher **seriousness in the relationship and dealings with the Diaspora**, that includes binding agreements to strengthen the relations between countries of origin and the Diaspora, needs to be achieved.

Professionalization of the communication between country of origin and diaspora

Ms. Amira Bieber of Bundesdachverband Merhamet Deutschland e.V. emphasized the need to professionalize the communication channels of governments to provide Diaspora relevant information in an appropriate way. A strong and professional communication can be implemented by drawing up a **one-stop-portal for the Diaspora**, where information on social, political and economic issues as well as secondary information, such as Q & A to topics like visa requirements or voting information are provided. Furthermore, **dialogue adviser**, who are particularly responsible for the communication between countries of origin and the Diaspora, need to be installed in consulates. Another important issue is to change the image of Diaspora in the Western Balkan countries and create content for and about the Diaspora in the **national television**.





Enablement of more opportunities for participation

Mr. Mijo Marić from the Croatian World Congress highlighted the need of ensuring Diasporas participation. As a first step countries of origin should recognize Diaspora relations as important issue to be anchored in legislative institutions, for instance in form of installation of Diaspora committees. Moreover, the **parliamentary representation** of the Diaspora in the countries of origin needs to be strengthened. Therefore, Political participation of migrants in countries of origin should be facilitated by a simplification of the **voting process**: the voting system needs to be more inclusive and postal voting or web-based voting technologies to be introduced. Furthermore, Diaspora members should be involved **as experts in policy making processes**, both, concerning migration and Diaspora policies, but also for specific subjects which draw on the wide expertise in the Diaspora.

Institutionalization of cooperation channels

Ms. Anduena Stephan of Integrative Deutsch-Albanische Gesellschaft e.V. emphasized the need to **institutionalize the channels of cooperation** with the Diaspora, e.g. through a governmental institution in charge, which represents coherently the migration and Diaspora policy towards the Diaspora. Furthermore, the involvement of migrants as **promoter of economic** development needs to be strengthened, through bilateral chambers of commerce for instance. Moreover, **formal networks** between governmental institutions and NGOs in the country of origin and migrant organizations should be created and promoted. Another important issue is to initiate programs for the **promotion of knowledge transfer** and to increase the **promotion of investments**. Processes of **recognition of training and university degrees** from abroad need to be simplified and transparency has to be ensured to facilitate knowledge transfer. Ms. Stephan pointed out “to make use of the Diaspora’s potential as long as migrants are motivated”.

» d. Summary of the Dialogue-Day

The Dialogue-Day of the workshop emphasized the importance of establishing strong communication via diverse channels to foster dialogue between Diaspora and countries of origin as well as migrants among themselves and their organizations. **Web-based dialogue forums were identified as promising tools. However, it was highlighted that various online and offline communication channels should be considered to ensure an inclusive and sustainable dialogue with the Diaspora.**

Migrants’ contributions for the development of their countries of origin have to be recognized and appreciated. Furthermore, communication between Governments and Diaspora should be strengthened in order to create cooperation and enable migrants’ participation. Diaspora representatives analyzed current Governmental-Diaspora-Relations and pointed out key issues and major concerns in that regard.



5| Perspectives for

Governmental-Diaspora-Relations

The third day of the workshop focused on perspectives for dialogue with and participation of migrants.

» Country specific road maps

Three country specific working groups exchanged experiences regarding the dialogue with and participation of migrants. In each working group government representatives as well as members of the Diaspora participated. The road maps were outlined as action plans for sustainable and mutually beneficial Governmental-Diaspora-Relations.

Road map for Albania and Kosovo

The roadmap for Albania and Kosovo was presented by Ms. Anduena Stephan and Mr. Engjell Begalla, Director for Consular Affairs and Diaspora in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Albania. They emphasized in their presentation the importance of working out a **Diaspora strategy based on a coherent migration policy and followed by a concrete action plan**. In this process all relevant stakeholders from migrant associations, central and local governments the private sector, the media and others need to be included to ensure institutional ownership and **accountability**. Furthermore, to realize a so called **triple-win-situation** governments of host countries, the EU, development agencies and international organizations may be involved as well. The strategy has to be **specific and transparent** to the people. Moreover, a **regional perspective** on Diaspora policy is essential to bring together joint interests, needs and forces and make initiatives more efficient. The roadmap included the following milestones.

Addressee government

- **Review the political, economic, social and legal situation for Diaspora initiatives** in the countries of origin and, if necessary, put laws and regulations in place to facilitate the implementation of the Diaspora policies;
- Create **Terms of Reference for Diaspora policies**, including definition of the role, contribution and form of cooperation of the different stakeholders (such as governments of Albania and Kosovo, migrant organizations, representatives of NGOs and other institutions in Albania and Kosovo);
- Frame and communicate specific **strategies for Diaspora dialogue** and cooperation as well as action plans;
- **Assemble a committee**, including experts from countries of origin, Diaspora and government representatives, as a focal point to ensure official instruction and implementation of the working outcomes.

- **Mapping migrant organizations** to capture the whole variety of associations and activities (business, students, cultural, professional women etc.) in order to overcome fragmented efforts and become more structured and professional. At the same time, the engagement of Diaspora needs to be recognized and the existing institutions and structures need to be used;
- Organize **consultation sessions with the Diaspora** in order to solicit ideas for development initiatives;
- Set up an **operational center for Diaspora engagement** (like a One-Stop-Shop);
- Mobilize the **local media and the media in the host countries**.

Addressee Diaspora

- Carry out a **Diaspora forum** (on a regular basis) in order to crosscheck vision, ideas, motivations and programs; decide on form of organization (legal form, members, activities, etc.);
- **Approach partners for funding** on national and international level.

During the working group session, the migrant organizations and government representatives from Albania and Kosovo worked out the presented road map and expressed their willingness to continue working together and carry out Diaspora strategies including the mentioned milestones.

Road map for Serbia and Montenegro

Ms. Ana Milosevic, member of the (Diaspora-) Parliament of Serbia, presented the roadmap for Serbia and Montenegro as spokesperson for her working group. The vision of the Serbian and Montenegrin Diaspora is to **become respected partners** of their countries of origin. The main asset of the Diaspora is its people with their know-how, expertise and wish to be involved in the development of the countries of origin. Therefore, a strong partnership and mutual cooperation was proposed to serve the interests of all. To reach this vision, the following issues need to be considered.

Addressee government

- Work out clear **strategies for Diaspora dialogue and cooperation** (short-term and long-term level) on the basis of coherent migration and Diaspora policies;
- **Know, address and engage the Diaspora** in various forms (via web-based dialogue for instance);
- **Identify interests and concerns of the Diaspora** as well as lack of cooperation and work on them;
- Strengthen and maintain channels of **communication with migrant organizations**;
- **Facilitate Diasporas' involvement** in the social, economic and political development of their countries of origin;
- **Practice good governance** ("take the private sector as an example and learn from it").
- Promote a better **image of the Diaspora** in the countries of origin.

Addressee Diaspora

- Learn to **lobby for the countries of origin**;
- Create informal networks for **knowledge sharing**.

The vision of the working group for Serbia and Montenegro is to **"bring Diasporas back as partners"**.

Road map for Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina

The roadmap on Diaspora policy for Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina was presented by Mr. Mijo Marić and Mr. Almir Alijagic, Chairman of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora Business Forum (BHdiaFor) and President of the Association "Our Perspectives". The vision outlined is a real **partnership between governments and Diaspora**; that is a "hand in hand" cooperation and "eye to eye" communication. This includes institutions in the country of origin and the receiving country with **clear mandates for Diaspora matters**. These institutions should have strong communication with the Diaspora, creating networks by using different tools such as media channels. Furthermore, an important aspect is that the countries of origin need to recognize and appreciate the Diaspora contributions. Moreover, governments need to create a data base and get to know their Diaspora.

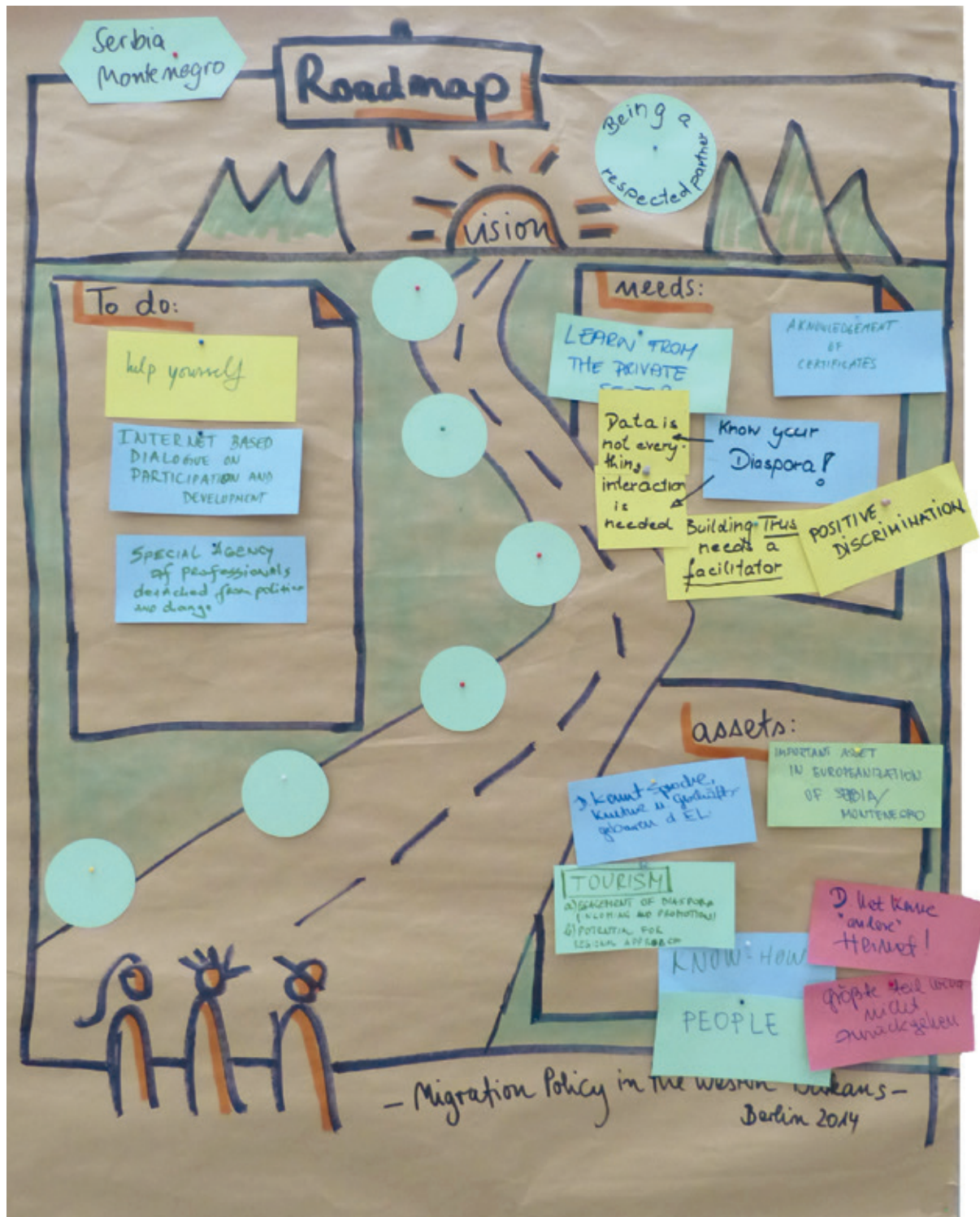
The following milestones for Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina only address the governments:

- Develop a **mutual beneficial partnership** between the Diaspora and the country of origin and invite an international organization to function as mediator and facilitator;
- **Get to know and engage the Diaspora's potential** for supporting socio-political and economic development in their countries of origin;
- **Create and strengthen communication** channels on formal and informal levels;
- Foster **relations to the second and third generation** of Diaspora as well, to pave the way for future engagement for development;
- **Facilitate political participation** of the Diaspora, by simplifying the voting process (allowing postal and online voting), and strengthen their parliamentary representation.

Further actions that governments can take to facilitate Diaspora cooperation:

- Renovate the domestic financial systems to **attract formal money transfers** from the Diaspora;
- **Establish investment and development funds** and provide information services for potential Diaspora investors;
- Integrate the **migration and development nexus into educational curriculums**, for instance, highlighting **success stories of Diaspora** driven investments and created jobs (through this approach, the relevance of Diaspora is systematically brought into the minds of the next generation of leaders).

Road map for Serbia and Montenegro



6 | Summary, Overall Findings and Conclusion

The objective of the fourth Regional Workshop on “Migration Policy in the Western Balkans” was to strengthen government institutions responsible for migration and Diaspora policies by offering a regional platform for dialogue, exchange of experiences and good practices, and by fostering an atmosphere of trust where issues regarding participation of and cooperation with migrants could be discussed. By focusing on engagement for development, dialogue with and participation of Diaspora and perspectives for Governmental-Diaspora-Relations, it was made possible to

- ① Emphasize on the **relevance and potential of Diaspora**;
- ② Initiate and facilitate a **dialogue** between Diaspora and governments; and
- ③ Create **action plans and clear visions** on how Diaspora policy should be implemented and what the responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders are.

Thereby, a consented and meaningful base for a mutual beneficial cooperation, equal partnership and participative inclusion of Diaspora into policy making processes of the countries of origin was created.

Moreover, the following results were achieved:

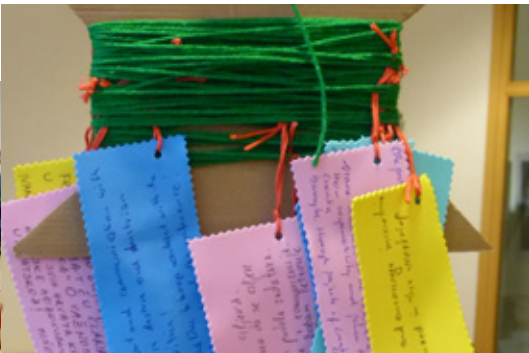
- **Tools and instruments for communication** were introduced and their respective pros and cons for dialogue and participation of Diaspora were shown;
- A sustainable dialogue between Diaspora and government representatives was initiated and **interests, needs and concerns of Diasporas** were identified;
- The European Diaspora joined into an informal **network** on migration and Diaspora in the Western Balkan region.

Bearing in mind the findings of the second and third event of the regional series of workshops, prerequisites for mutual beneficial Governmental-Diaspora-Relations are coherent, well-coordinated **government policies targeting the Diaspora**. In addition, strengthening the dialogue with and participation of migrants needs to be included as an inherent issue into migration and Diaspora strategies. Sustainable Diaspora dialogue also requires **intra-governmental coordination between national and local level institutions**. Since migrants identify stronger locally than nationally, **local authorities must be recognized as important stakeholders** and must be encouraged to approach actively and directly the Diaspora as target group.



Following this fourth Regional Workshop, the governments are very motivated to strengthen and maintain sustainable relationships with their Diasporas. Consequently, **concrete advisory requests have emerged** to support partner governments in designing and developing Diaspora relations.

One crucial finding of the workshop is that **knowing the Diaspora is the basis** to establish inclusive and cooperative Diaspora relations. This will contribute to the development of a professional and efficient Diaspora policy. It was emphasized that knowing the Diaspora includes more than collecting data. A mapping of Diaspora requires **interaction and networking** and therefore, provides the chance to initiate a process of participation and dialogue including all relevant stakeholders. In this context, the **importance of regional cooperation** was highlighted. A meaningful mapping exercise with regional scope can only be conducted as an international project and full commitment as well as cooperation on the level of the Western Balkan countries. An approach of this kind might also contribute to overcome differences and prejudices within different countries and their Diaspora.



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