



ALBANIA | Tirana TAIEX Workshop on Migration



During 12-13 November 2015, the Albanian People's Advocate institution hosted in Tirana the international workshop "*Defending the rights of applicants for international protection*", funded by and co-organized with the European Commission, in the framework of the TAIEX program.

This activity gathered around 150 participants representing a wide range of experts and practitioners from national, regional and international stakeholders – including Ombudsman Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions, line ministries and public administration agencies (asylum authorities and border guards), EU bodies, international organizations and the civil society. Amongst others, participating countries from the larger Mediterranean area and Europe included Algeria Bosnia and Hercegovina, Egypt, France, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Germany, Kosovo*, Malta, Montenegro, Serbia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. Speakers addressing the panels included representatives from the European Union, FRONTEX, EASO, UNHCR, IOM and various Ombudsman Institutions.

The Tirana workshop on migration aimed at exchanging knowledge, experiences and best practices on defending the rights of applicants for international protection or people fleeing from persecution or serious harm in their own country, in particular in line with the 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugees and the EU legislation on asylum. Given the diverse representation from AOM network, the workshop provided also a good opportunity for member institutions to exchange views and discuss area of potential prospective joint engagement.

In light of the increased migratory flows, the workshop panels focused on different aspects of international protection, including the right to asylum and the principle of *non-refoulement*, as well as subsidiary and temporary protection. Thematic presentations and deliberations cater to the identification of effective ways and means to support applicants for international protection in receiving adequate protection while attaining the rights granted to them under national and international law.

Importantly, the workshop also provided an overview of the latest developments within the EU and the latter's efforts in managing the refugee crisis, which includes funding for emergency assistance, as well as relocation of asylum seekers and creation of hotspots within the EU and funding for provision of assistance and humanitarian aid in third countries.

For more information on the Tirana TAIEX workshop on migration, please visit the dedicated link http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taix/dyn/taix-events/library/detail_en.jsp?EventID=60094, featuring details of the activity and various online resources from speakers and participating experts.

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.*



Concluding Remarks at the Tirana TAIEX Workshop
“Defending the Rights of Applicants for International Protection”

By the People’s Advocate of Albania, Mr. Igli Totozani

13 November 2015

Honorable Guests,

The lively and earnest discussions during these two days once again confirm the salience and sensitivity of the challenges posed by the mixed migratory flows for the protection and promotion of human rights.

The challenge we face is global. Hence the responsibility and engagement ought also to be global in scope.

During the proceedings of the workshop, we availed of the opportunity to address the refugee and migration crisis both from the theoretical standpoint, as well as from the practical side. The diverse presentations addressing the workshop sessions represent perspective and experiences of various national and international stakeholders – which provide an important background to the everyday work we carry in our home institutions.

Alongside a number of important international instruments, including the 1951 UN Convention regulating the status of asylum seekers, it is important to underline that there are also various Directives concerning people in need of international protection.

The development and implementation of a principal approach constitutes a pressing challenge for EU countries, as well as countries from the Western Balkans including those comprising already important transit countries and those that could potentially become part of the transit itineraries in the future.

- It is of importance to acknowledge that Europe is confronted with a humanitarian crisis – and not only! The current situation demands the earnest commitment of Human Rights Institution to guarantee and promote the human rights of people currently part of the mixed migratory flows.
- The management of the complex migration flux and the need to maintain order in the border transit points ought to be compliant with a human-rights approach and in keeping with all national and international obligations for human rights in all affected countries.
- According to the latest figures published by UNHCR, only during the month of October 2015, approximately 700.000 people have reached the shores of Europe. A most important aspect of the predicament we all face is that of ensuring a speedy identification of people attempting to enter the European space and who are in need of international protection. In this connection, there is naturally a need to ensure that this category be differentiated from other migrant categories that endeavor entrance to Europe solely for improved economic opportunities.



- The consequences ensuing from identification process that is not speedy are indeed numerous. Amongst others, delays in this identification process are bound to undermine the credibility of the European system of international protection and are bound to lead to a deterioration of the conditions faced by vulnerable groups.
- The response to the current situation ought to be unified and sustainable. A concerted response shall require the engagement and effective coordination within the European Union, as well as an inclusive approach to the management of the situation by countries of origin, transit and destination.
- The daunting challenges posed by the current situation bring to the fore the need for Ombudsman Institutions to work closely with state authorities, with a view to ensure that all authorities involved in various aspects or segments of the migratory flows ensure the upholding of human rights standards.
- Importantly, the cooperation of Ombudsman Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions from origin, transit and destination countries is of vital importance in order to guarantee a human-rights based approach and the respect for human rights along the migration itineraries.
- The mixed migratory flows have made evident the need for a long-term vision and sustainable solution developed and endorsed by state authorities. Ombudsman Institutions as key institutions for the promotion of human rights have a critical role to play in this context and the need is clear for a stepped-up and close cooperation also with international institutions, the European Union, UNHCR, IOM, as well as the civil society.

At the conclusion of this activity and its fruitful deliberations and discussions, availing of this opportunity, please allow me to express appreciation for the participation and active contributions from the representatives of the European Union, from international organizations and networks, from Ombudsman Institutions and the various other state agencies.
