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POLICE AND ROMAS MEET TO DISCUSS CONFLICTS IN HUNGARY

During the Cold War, police in Central and Eastern Europe were usually regarded with fear and distrust by citizens. This image has been difficult to dispel, even though the criminal justice system has been significantly reformed. In Hungary, with a new constitution committed to protecting civilian rights, legal equality, and democratic principles, the criminal justice system must learn to function within the community and work in cooperation with citizens.

Discrimination against minorities, particularly Romas, who often live in poor housing conditions with limited education, remains a very large problem in Hungary. Historically, the relationship between minorities and the criminal justice system has been marked by discrimination, prejudice, and mistrust.

To break down these prejudices, Partners-Hungary's Chief Trainer Sandor Gesko conducted a series of communication trainings and cooperative problem solving workshops to promote dialogue between police and community residents in Nograd County. In Ersekvadkert, Gesko facilitated a forum to examine discriminatory actions of a local police officer against Romas. Forum participants included the chief of the Nograd County police, city policemen, local Roma leaders, the mayor, and local citizens. As a result of the forum, a task force was set up to investigate the discriminatory allegations, to follow up on them, and to prevent such actions in the future. After the forum, Romany citizens reported a marked improvement in their relations with the police.

Additional cooperative planning forums led to the establishment of the Nograd County Security Program, which is composed of subcommittees that work to foster crime prevention and police/community interaction. Included in this program is an ethnic subcommittee, which facilitates communication between police and minority members and organizes programs for mutual understanding and cooperative planning.

ETHNIC CONCILIATION COMMISSION OPENS IN SLOVAKIA

Tensions are rising in Levice, a town 90 miles south of Bratislava, Slovakia. Since the construction of a nuclear power plant on the outskirts of the city five years ago, the population has almost tripled. Relations are strained between original city inhabitants and the new workers. Conflicts are increasingly arising between Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians, and with the Roma population, who face discrimination, poor education, and high unemployment rates.

To help the Levice community deal with these issues, Partners-Slovakia has established an Ethnic Conciliation Commission (ECC). Partners' ECCs are neutral, community-based structures able to mediate disputes involving ethnic and minority issues. ECC members represent the ethnic diversity of their communities and meet to discuss and resolve community conflicts. The Levice Commission is composed of journalists, educators, religious leaders, Roma and Hungarian minority representatives, technical experts from the nuclear plant, and local government representatives. Partners-Slovakia has trained the group in communication and team-building skills, and in conciliation and mediation processes. The Commission has already handled three cases this quarter.

The ECC plans to work with police, local government, and citizens to cooperatively address ethnic conflicts. Building on the success of this Commission, Partners-Slovakia plans to establish additional ECCs in other towns in Slovakia.



Patricio Navarro, Sergio Bobrovsky, Partners' President Raymond Shonholtz, and Carlos Bobrovsky met in Argentina to plan the development of Partners' new Center

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - EXPANDS IT MISSION

This November, Partners for Democratic Change (Partners) celebrated its eighth birthday. Beginning its work in 1989 in Moscow with a series of seminars for Soviet government officials conducted by John McDonald and John Marks, Partners has evolved into seven (soon to be ten) National Centers on Conflict and Change Management. Partners has become the largest conflict and change management training

and application organization in Central and Eastern Europe.

Over 6,000 government officials, non-government activists, labor leaders, and business executives in over 14 countries will be trained this year by Partners' trainers. Beyond training, new dimensions to conflict and change management theory and practice are occurring at each Center, including: ethnic and national minority mediations; community-wide facilitations; application of cooperative planning processes to municipal issues; resolution of business disputes through Center-based mediation services; and development of university courses through innovative workshops for academics.

The breadth of Partners' work has resulted in the development of a new profession of mediators, facilitators, negotiators, trainers, and academics throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Drawing on this rich experience, Partners has applied an East-to-East Training Program that brings skilled trainers from one Center to another, to develop the skills of new trainers, or to conduct trans-national training programs in countries where new Centers are under consideration.

Recognizing the increasing number of requests for development of new Centers, Partners' Board of Directors has broadened the organization's mission beyond Central and Eastern Europe. Partners will open its first Latin American Center in Argentina, and will assess requests for new Centers from other Latin American countries. To meet the demand, Partners will be building "strategic partnerships" with other organizations that have expertise in a particular country or region.

Planning for the new Century, Partners is expanding its mission to promote a culture of conflict and change management globally.

PARTNERS' VISIBILITY

Partners for Democratic Change's programs and activities have recently appeared in several journals, newsletters, and books. Partners' staff wrote articles or edited editions of the following:

- The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, "Strengthening Transitional Democracies Through Conflict Resolution," July 1997, Co-Edited by Raymond Shonholtz and Ilana Shapiro.
- The National Institute for Dispute Resolution's NIDR News, September/October 1997, edited by Juliette Linzer.
- The Negotiation Journal's article on "Facilitating Between Gang Members and Police" by co-author Ilana Shapiro.
- "Community Justice," by Raymond Shonholtz, Minerva Press, Japan.

Additional articles on Partners' work will soon be published in the International Negotiation Journal, Mott Exchange, and Handbook of Inter-Ethnic Coexistence.

Partners' has created a web-page, prepared by Gabrielle Naughten.



Partners-Bulgaria Chief Trainer Mitko Marinov, Director Antoinette Shishmanova, and Market Mediation Manager Ventseslav Panchev

PARTNERS-BULGARIA AND THE BULGARIAN INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE MEDIATION

Record-high inflation, a low privatization rate, and little foreign investment have plagued the development of Bulgaria's market sector. This uncertain economic environment often causes misunderstandings and conflicts between business partners, derailing potentially lucrative enterprises. Business disputes traditionally end up in court, turning into an expensive and time-consuming ordeal.

Partners-Bulgaria has responded to this situation by offering mediation training and services to the country's business sector. Recognizing the importance of this initiative, the Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA), the country's largest voluntary organization of corporations and trade unions, is now working with Partners-Bulgaria to make business mediation services available to its 13,000 members.

The BIA assists businesses in establishing partnerships and promoting business ethics through its 27 regional offices. In June, Partners-Bulgaria signed an agreement with the BIA in which the two entities will work together to develop a dispute resolution system for BIA membership. Partners-Bulgaria will train BIA members in mediation, offer consulting services, and provide mediation services for disputes among BIA's membership.

According to BIA Vice-Chairperson Milena Staikova, "BIA's agreement with Partners-Bulgaria represents a historic opportunity to provide an effective and civilized dispute resolution process to thousands of Bulgarian businesses, helping to prepare our market sector for the 21st century."

PARTNERS HOSTS ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS IN BULGARIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Though many of Partners' National Center's programs focus on the practical application of conflict resolution skills, Partners is also committed to educating future leaders in conflict resolution theory and practice. This has been accomplished through the development and teaching of university level courses.

Partners recently held two Academic Workshops, focusing on conflict resolution course development, in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. The Workshop in the Czech Republic, led by Dr. Dennis Sandole, Professor at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University, focused on an overview of the analysis and resolution of violent conflict, with an emphasis on curricula design for university-level courses. Workshop participants included academics from universities throughout the Czech Republic, representing disciplines such as international relations and psychology.

Professor Charles Wiggins, from the law faculty of the University of San Diego, led the Academic Workshop in Bulgaria. Professor Wiggins' workshop focused on business negotiation and mediation coursework. Participating academics were introduced to a new pedagogical style, and were provided with role-plays and simulations for use in their new courses.

After the Workshop, Professor Maria Ganeva of Bourgas Free University in Bulgaria, commented that, "The knowledge and skills [taught at the Workshop] will be of great use to our students." Additionally, several participants expressed interest in beginning cross-cultural research projects in business mediation and conflict resolution.



Partners-Hungary Director Kinga Goncz and Mott Foundation Media Consultant John Brosky meet to discuss the Center's programs and accomplishments

PARTNERS-HUNGARY MEDIATES DISPUTE BETWEEN CITIZENS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

In Dorog, Hungary, an impasse arose between a waste management company and a local environmental group that led them to Partners-Hungary's Mediation Center. The waste management company agreed to incinerate refuse from a neighboring town. The Dorog Environmental Association, a citizens' group dedicated to ecological issues, claimed that such an increase in waste incineration would dangerously

increase air and water pollution levels. At the same time, the waste management company claimed that it was being treated unfairly in the press by the Association.

Mediators at the Partners-Hungary Mediation Center met with both groups. The Association demanded that the company immediately cease the burning of waste from other communities, and that it have the right to monitor and periodically inspect the company's facilities. The company insisted that the Association report information about the incinerator's environmental impact to the public in an accurate and objective manner.

The mediation led to a seven-part agreement which gave the Association access to the company's facilities and records. Most importantly, the company agreed to stop incinerating refuse from other towns. The Association agreed to report the company's activities based on full, accurate information.

The parties met three months later to evaluate the agreement. While the company expressed concern over perceived negative publicity from the Association, both parties decided to extend the agreement indefinitely. Partners-Hungary's mediators will continue to meet with the parties on a quarterly basis to promote an ongoing dialogue.

PARTNERS TRAINS ACROSS BORDERS

Partners' Centers regularly work together to develop programs across borders and to replicate one another's projects. This cooperation among Partners' network of trainers and consultants is fundamental to Partners' approach to building capacity within the region.

This past July, Partners-Hungary Director Kinga Goncz and Partners-Bulgaria Chief Trainer Mitko Marinov traveled to Georgia to conduct a training-for-trainers and a training for Georgian NGO leaders.

Goncz and Marinov first conducted the three-day training for new Partners-Georgia trainers, strengthening their professional skills, practicing team-building exercises, and emphasizing goal-planning and organizational development for the Georgian Center. According to Partners-Georgia trainer Badri Kochoradze, "... learning from other Partner's trainers, whose experiences have been somewhat similar to ours in Georgia, was invaluable."

During the second part of the training, Goncz and Marinov teamed up with the newly trained Partners-Georgia trainers to conduct a five-day training for NGO leaders representing organizations throughout Georgia. This training focused on communication, negotiation, and facilitation skills, and group decision-making and team-building processes. The Georgian NGO leaders were provided with the skills necessary to survive under difficult conditions.

In another example of Partners' cross-border work, Partners-Slovakia Market Mediation Director Janos Hrubala and Partners-Czech Community Mediation Director Alice Hamplova recently met in Prague to brainstorm about marketing and outreach strategies for their mediation work.

Many of Partners' Centers are doing work in the former Eastern Bloc countries. Partners-Poland Director Maciej Tanski recently completed a long-term training program in the Ukraine with the Emerging Leaders

Forum. Also in the Ukraine, Partners-Czech Director Dana Rabinakova conducted a training for NGO leaders. Partners-Slovakia trainers have also conducted trainings for NGO leaders in Belarus, Estonia, and Latvia. In addition, Partners-Lithuania Director Juozas Lakis has been teaching a course for students at the Management and Finances University in Bialystok, Poland.

To foster collaboration and cooperation among Partners' Centers, Partners-Hungary will host a summit conference on community development this winter. This conference will provide Center Directors and staff with an opportunity to exchange information and training experience with each other.



Community Mediation Center Director Alice Hamplova

PARTNERS-CZECH COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTER "CENTRUM DOHODY" CONTINUES TO GROW

Dana Rabinakova, Director of Partners-Czech, and Alice Hamplova, Director of Centrum Dohody, Partners-Czech's Community Mediation Center, were interviewed during their recent visit to New York.

Why do you feel mediation is so important in the Czech Republic?

Many people in the Czech Republic don't see conflict as something that can be solved. Traditionally, people handle conflicts by fighting, either directly, or behind one another's backs. Mediation helps people to look at other options that might resolve their conflict and brings a new perspective to the situation. In addition, courts are extremely overloaded. Cases might have to wait two or three years before being heard in court, giving plenty of time for conflicts to escalate. Through mediation, conflicts can be dealt with earlier, before conflicts have heightened.

Who are Centrum Dohody's mediators?

So far we have trained 30 mediators, and we are holding another mediator training this fall. Our mediators represent diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds, to suit the needs of our clients, and include lawyers, university professors, students, trainers, and counselors.

Who are Centrum Dohody's clients?

Our Center handles mostly family and divorce disputes. Because of the housing crisis in Prague, many

couples are forced to live or work together even after a divorce. Mediation can do a great deal to help ease tensions in these situations. We also handle cases dealing with ethnic disputes, usually with Roma citizens. In addition, we mediate employer-employee disputes for a number of corporate clients.

Is mediation recognized under Czech law?

Mediation is only incorporated into the criminal law code, so we have mediators who deal with victim-offender conflicts. Currently, the government is revising the family law code, and we hope that mediation will be incorporated into it. We have given presentations to the Parliament and the Senate to inform them about mediation, and we plan to continue to our work with them this fall.

What are Centrum Dohody's plans for the upcoming year?

Our mission is to educate the public about mediation, through the media, trainings, and presentations. We wish to promote not only Centrum Dohody, but also an important new style of dispute resolution to the Czech people. We also intend to extend our outreach to more ethnic minority clients.

PARTNERS PLANS NEW CENTERS IN ARGENTINA, ROMANIA, AND CROATIA

During recent trips to Argentina, Romania, and Croatia, Partners' President and international staff found that there was strong support for the type of conflict management training and capacity building that a Partners' Center would offer. Partners' staff met with representatives from national and local governments, NGOs, in-country funders, local universities, and the American Embassy, all of whom encouraged Partners to establish National Centers on Conflict and Change Management.

Partners is currently in the process of establishing National Centers in Argentina, Romania, and possibly Croatia. These Centers will have programs similar to Partners' existing Centers, and will include:

- training indigenous trainers in conflict and change management skills and processes;
- training government, non-government, and market sector leaders;
- applying mediating methodologies such as dialogue groups and citizen participation processes to specific in-country conflicts;
- promoting public policies that create mediating structures such as ethnic conciliation commissions, to advance civil society;
- developing and teaching university courses in conflict management theory and practice; and,
- implementing strategies for organizational sustainability.

Meetings with government and NGO leaders in Argentina, Romania, and Croatia revealed that while there is some training currently taking place in "first generation" conflict management skills (communication, negotiation, facilitation), more sophisticated skills training is not available.

For decision-makers to make progress toward social and economic change, "second generation" skills training in cooperative planning, multi-party problem-solving, consensus-building, third-party mediating and conciliating is necessary. Partners' Centers will provide leaders in these countries with the skills needed to advance civil society.



Partners-Czech Director Dan Rabinakova, Partners' Vice President Jim Isenberg, Partners-Bulgaria Director Antoinette Shishmanova, Partners-Poland Director Maciej Tanski, and consultant Charles Wiggins in Budapest

PARTNERS' HIGHLIGHTS

Bulgaria

In Smolyan, in southern Bulgaria, trainers Mitko Marinov and Ivelin Nikolov led a cooperative planning and problem-solving session for representatives of local government. In Sliven, the Community Dialogue Group participated in two trainings: one in mediation, and one in organizational development. Trainer Reneta Veneva led a strategic planning training for the staff of the Open Society Institute in Gabrovo, and Marinov and Ventseslav Panchev led a facilitation for members of the Women's Alliance for Development. A group of soccer players were also trained in conflict resolution skills.

Czech Republic

Director Dana Rabinakova and trainers Helena Bohackova and Vladimir Jelen conducted a series of management and conflict prevention trainings organized by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for social workers in refugee camps. Trainers Petra Pekarkova, Tatjana Siskova, Jitka Jimenicka, and Helena Storova conducted a series of lectures in public schools to teach students about tolerance, especially toward Roma groups, and Milan Stiburek held trainings for student peer groups in drug dependency prevention. Alice Hamplova, Director of Centrum Dohody, the Community Mediation Center, worked with the Czech Senate and Congress to promote public policy legislation.

Georgia

Director Vano Matchavariani and Partners-Georgia trainers facilitated a series of meetings between Georgian and Abkhazian NGO leaders. Matchavariani participated in a Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, which focused on designing conflict resolution trainings. Matchavariani also gave a presentation on security and conflicts in the Caucasus region at Stanford University. The Georgian Center completed its first training for trainers, and then went on to train a group of Georgian NGO leaders. In addition, the Center just received a grant to train members of the Georgian Parliament, as well as a grant to fund an Academic program.

Hungary

The Hungarian Center continued work on its numerous cooperative planning projects, which bring citizens, NGOs, and local governments together to resolve community issues. Projects are ongoing in Balassagyarmat (concerning training for prisoners who are ready to be released), Tatabanya, and Tiszavasvari (concerning public employment for Romas), under the direction of Istvan Herbai and Sandor Gesko. Trainers Herbai and Agnes Szirmai continued their organizational development and cooperative planning training for NGOs. Members of the Center's Ethnic Commission in Nagykanizsa completed a communication skills program for Roma children.

Lithuania

Trainer Kristina Maulyte conducted a conflict resolution training and counseling session for women at the Women's Support Center in Varena. Director Juozas Lakis trained NGO representatives in "Partnership and Cooperation" in Vilnius, and Jurate Tamosaityte trained representatives of NGOs for the elderly from all over Central and Eastern Europe. Lakis also conducted a negotiation training in Bialystok, Poland for business students. Tamosaityte and Maulyte held trainings for high school teachers and students, and the Center began a program for secondary school students on Cross Cultural Communication, which brings together youths from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Poland

Partners-Poland conducted two follow-up trainings for mediators, led by US Consultant Charles Wiggins, Director Maciej Tanski and trainer Ilona Ilowiecka. The Emerging Leaders Forum project in Krakow completed its last training; participants chose a group project to work on for the rest of the year, commemorating Polish-Ukraine border cooperation throughout history. Partners-Poland also gave a four-day training in team building and management for State Public Health Education Department managers. The Center also held a series of trainings for the School for Young Civic and Political Leaders in basic and advanced conflict resolution skills.

Slovak Republic

Dusan Ondrusek and Natalia Kusnierikova continued their organizational development training for six of the most well-developed, policy oriented NGOs in Slovakia. Ondrusek trained a group of Russian NGO representatives in advanced training techniques, and led trainings in Belarus and Poland for NGO leaders. Vladimir Labath and Partners-Slovakia trainers completed their Constitutionalism project with a summer school for teachers. Ales Bednarik, Inge Jalcova, and Ivana Tothova led a social skills training for children

from orphanages all over Slovakia. Gabriel Bianchi and Bednarik held a negotiation training for Environmental Administration Office staff in Trencianske Teplice.

International

Representatives from each of Partners' Center participated in a study tour to Northern Ireland, organized by Judit Levenda of Partners-Hungary. During this tour, Partners' representatives visited NGOs and learned about their development in a Western European country.

Juozas Lakis, Director of Partners-Lithuania, spent six weeks in the United States in the fall of 1997 to visit conflict management programs. He spent much of his time at the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution at Columbia University.

Dusan Ondrusek, Director of Partners-Slovakia, is spending the fall of 1997 as a research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Partners' International staff, from San Francisco, New York, Budapest, and Prague attended a strategic planning workshop in San Francisco during August 1997. The week long workshop included an internal assessment of Partners' strengths and organizational development; an evaluation of National Center programs and activities including academic, ethnic, and market mediation; a discussion about strategies for new Center development; a plan for building relationships and future strategic alliances; and, a review of strategies for sustainability.

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