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Joint Report on National Workshops /INFORM WP5

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1. INTRODUCTION

National consultative workshops 1 and 2 in each country are a part of Work package (WP) 5: “Capacity building”, starting in the 8th and ending in the 30th month of the INFORM project.

The main objective of WP 5 is to **build the capacity of the research team, of the national offices for European integration in the Western Balkan and of the DG NEAR offices** through consultative workshops in order to advance the potential for tailor-made action in relation to each of the target countries.

Activities related to national workshops include holding two series of consultative meetings with representatives of the national offices for European integration in the six countries of the Western Balkans: in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. As indicated, these consultation meetings should strengthen: a) the capacities of the research team(s) involved in the INFORM project by gathering knowledge from the National offices for European integration in the six Western Balkans states; b) the capacities of the national offices for European integration in the six Western Balkans states by offering national policy makers insight into the project and its results at various phases of the project; c) the information base for policy makers at the European level, especially of those who are directly involved in the enlargement process.

2. THE WORKSHOPS

All workshops followed the general pattern outlined in the “Toolkits and Guidelines”, developed by the University of Maribor (UM)(WP5 lead), in order to help organizers carry out these workshops. Each of the national workshops thus consisted of five phases, each with its own planned output (see Table 1).

Table 1: First INFORM National Workshop Outline

Phase 1: Start	Phase 2: Build in experience	Phase 3: Reflection	Phase 4: Output formation for participants	Phase 5: Output formation for the project
Who are we and what is our mission?	Who are the participants and how might INFORM be relevant for their area of expertise?	How could participants' expertise improve INFORM and could the project help to build their capacity/expertise.	How can the project help you?	How should INFORM proceed? How can you help the project?
Output: INFORM Project outline.	Output: Connecting participants expertise to the project.	Output: List of relevant items for building capacity.	Discussion about raising participants awareness & building capacity.	Discussion about raising INFORM's awareness & capacity.

Consequently, the joint report outlines the main findings from the first round of INFORM National workshops, roughly following the pattern outlined in Table 1. Specifically, after listing organizers and participants for each national workshop¹, the report a) outlines participants' reflection concerning topics and aims of the INFORM project (phase 1-3); b) presents participants' feedback regarding the potential of the INFORM project ; c) sums up and discusses main findings.

The order of how countries are presented and analyzed reflects the time when each individual workshop was organized (see Table 2).

Table 2: Timeline, First INFORM National Workshops

● Bosnia and Herzegovina:	● Sarajevo, 23.5.2017,
● Montenegro:	● Podgorica, 1.6.2017,
● Albania:	● Tirana, 7.6. 2017,
● Serbia:	● Belgrade, 7.6.2017,
● Macedonia:	● Skopje, 7.6.2017,
● Kosovo:	● Prishtina, 6.7. 2017

¹ Original participant list are enclosed at the end of the document.

2.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.1.1. Organizers/presenters for INFORM:

1. Adnan Efendic, CISAR Senior researcher and Project manager, WP4 lead
2. Hariz Halilovich, CISAR Senior researcher
3. Ismet Kumalic, CISAR Research fellow
4. Mirza Mujaric, CISAR Junior researcher and Project administrator

2.1.2. Participants

1. Mr. Edin Dilberovic, Head of Directorate for European integration
2. Ms. Mirela Cosic, PR at Directorate for European integration
3. Ms. Maja Rimac-Bjelobrk, VP at Directorate for European integration
4. Ms. Marina Kavaz-Sirucic, VP at Directorate for European integration
5. Ms. Amira Lazovic, VP at Directorate for European integration
6. Ms. Azra Hadžiahmetovic, Professor at University of Sarajevo, Head of Master programme for European integration
7. Mr. Adnan Tatar, Coordinator for European integration at Government of FBiH

The first contact with the National office was made late in March 2017 when a meeting was held with Mr. Edin Dilberovic, the head of Directorate for European integration in BiH. At the meeting, the first National workshop was discussed with particular focus on its timing, which was agreed to be in the second half of May 2017. Early in May 2017, it was agreed for the workshop to take place on 23 May 2017 in premises of the Directorate, and official invitation letters were sent to the Directorate (5 in total) with Mr. Goran Mirašić (advisor to the FBiH Prime Minister, 2 in total), and to Ms. Azra Hadžiahmetović (professor at University of Sarajevo, head of a Master programme on European integration).

2.1.3. Participants' reflection on INFORM's topic(s) and aim(s)

Several participants raised questions on informal institutions – the issue with term “institution” which already implies something (deeply) formalized. So, for the sake of participants' understanding, the difference between formal and informal institutions was discussed and it was agreed, since the participants encountered the phenomenon for the first time, to consider another term in local language as for example “informal practices”.

The participants recognized the fact that informal institutions provide the roadmap on how to set up the formal ones as well as that the aim of formalization of informal institutions is to avoid creating gaps, which, in their opinion, clearly exist. They suggested that one of the reasons for the existence of this gaps is the fact that **EU rules are not always grounded on informal institutions in the country. Because of this, the implementation of adopted rules is often missing, thereby creating the ground for emergence of**



informal practices and institutions. Then, “poor” implementation was identified as a cause of the gap-creating part in the country which indicated **the need of the INFORM project to focus on examining reasons behind poor implementation of the formal rules from the institutions, and on the ways to regaining trust in institutions.** Several examples were

offered, among which the EU Directives that regulate animal welfare and meat production was among those most discussed (probably because this topic was part of a briefly presented case study)². Specifically, participants stressed that it was the country’s government and its institutions that misjudged what was required in order to successfully implement EU Directives that regulate animal welfare and meat production (issues of stray dogs and still not standardized meat production processes were highlighted).

Next, it was pointed out that there have been several cases where the **BiH state institutions were not able to negotiate more accommodating implementation phase and deadlines than those proposed by the EU**, which raised a comment on poor decision making that did not include consultation process with stakeholders and experts.

Participants also stressed that Bosnia and Herzegovina faces many hurdles in the process of adopting certain EU rules and directives because of its complex internal structure that consists of three parts (FBiH, RS, BD), which are often at different stages of the accession process.

² Case studies, including one related to animal welfare and home food production, are part of the INFORM project research work, which at the time was not finished yet. Nevertheless, this particular case study already indicated some of the gaps identified in the INFORM project.

Awareness about the EU rules and the changes that they bring was also identified as an issue. **Due to poor advocacy and awareness-raising strategies, the rationale of why certain rules should be implemented, is often lost, consequently eroding trust in the institutions that try to implement those rules.** This creates a fertile ground for the emergence of informal practices and institutions.

Expectedly, the Directorate for European integration staff were particularly interested in specific examples where adoption and (proper) implementation of EU Directives lead to closing the gap (diminishing informal institutions). Also, participants were interested in ways to promote European integration better as in their opinion this could help narrow the gap between formal and informal institutions. Consequently, the participant from the FBiH Government commented that the appropriate mechanisms should be identified for engaging the public. Namely, it was indicated that **the public debates concerning the adoption of EU rules (and EU in general) are often not appropriate for BiH. As a consequence, they on average attract low interest from the citizens and public.**

2.1.4. Feedback and follow up – potential for capacity building

As indicated in the “Toolkit and guidelines” (D 5.1.), worksheets (1 and 2) and follow up notes were distributed to all participants in order to capture the “output” indicated under phase 4 and 5 (Table 1). And although only some of the participants returned the materials, information gathered provided valuable feedback, not only about what INFORM project can “give” to participants (new insights, new knowledge, etc.), but also about what should be the focus of the INFORM project regarding its connection to policy recommendations. Thus, the feedback offered important insights that could be directly linked to capacity building of policy makers and of the INFORM research team (i.e., what should be the research focus of INFORM research). For example, Mr. Edin Dilberovic, Head of the Directorate for European integration, indicated that he would be very much interested in: a) **identification of positive informality** and ways how to formalize it; b) in **examples/mechanism of how EU rules helped in dismantling negative informality.**

Ms. Maja Rimac-Bjelobrk, VP at Directorate for European integration, expressed deep interest in **understanding informality better; in how informal institutions can complement or support the formal ones** in the light of EU integration. Similar interest was expressed by Ms. Mirela Cosic, PR at Directorate

for European integrations and Ms. Marina Kavaz-Sirucic, VP at Directorate for European integrations, who also stated that she would be interested to see **the cost of informality vs. the cost of formality**.

Thus, the potential for capacity building could clearly be identified. In addition, the feedback, together with the first reflections of participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina about the INFORM project, further strengthened not only the rationale of why such workshops are beneficial (all participants indicated that the workshop provided them with new knowledge), but also of why there should be two rounds of national workshops. Namely, expressed opinions and interests of participants provided important information about where INFORM's research focus should be – this could not be realized if there would be only one workshop (e.g., after the completed research), which would consequently limit the usability of results coming from the project. In other words, the feedback provided indicated that such workshops are an important part of bridging the gap between research and policy.

2.2. Montenegro

2.2.1. Organizers/presenters for INFORM

1. Dr Klavs Sedlenieks, Lead Investigator, INFORM, Riga Stradins University
2. Dr Ieva Puzo, Researcher, INFORM, Riga Stradins University
3. Ms Diana Dubrovskaja, Researcher, INFORM, Riga Stradins University

2.2.2. Participants

1. Ms Violeta Berisaj, Head of Department for Political Criteria and the Rule of Law - Directorate for European Affairs;
2. Ms Mira Radulović, Head of Department for the Political System - Directorate for Legal Harmonisation with the Acquis;
3. Ms Tatjana Tomić, Secretary of the working group for chapters 1 and 6 - Directorate for European Affairs;
4. Ms. Melita Rastoder-Ljajić, Secretary of the working group for chapters 10 and 28 - Directorate for European Affairs (not present).

Dr Klavs Sedlenieks, lead investigator of the Riga Stradins University for INFORM team, first contacted the Ministry of European Affairs (Ministarstvo evropskih poslova or MEP) in late March. After extended

email exchanges and phone calls to various government officials, it was decided to hold the meeting on 1 June 2017 at the EU Info Centar in Podgorica. Invitations to participate in the consultative workshop were issued to several MEP officials, and four of them agreed to join the meeting.

2.2.3. Participants' reflection on INFORM's topic(s) and aim(s)

During the workshop, the Ministry representatives provided extensive feedback on the INFORM project and engaged in discussions both about the project as a whole and the ethnographic work conducted so far (by Dr Klavs Sedlenieks) and yet to be carried out (by Dr Ieva Puzo and Ms Diana Dubrovskaja) in Montenegro specifically.

The MEP representatives stressed their interest in understanding the discrepancies between formal rules and their implementation, for instance, in the areas of transportation safety and agricultural practices. They also acknowledged the existence of a clash between the EU's institutional way of accomplishing tasks and local traditions, expressing their wish to find out more about this from the INFORM project results.



Generally speaking, the participants from the Ministry of European Affairs stressed that the **people of Montenegro need to invest a lot of resources in order to comply with various EU rules and regulations**, for instance, in ensuring compliance with food safety regulations. **The question of access to various resources – for example, computers that would allow farmers to read local and EU regulations – was raised.** Overall, **the future of the country's agriculture sector was the main concern** for the Ministry representatives. Gender issues – for instance, preference for boys in Montenegro – were also raised as a topical question.

Regarding potential policy recommendations to be gained from the INFORM project, the Ministry representatives highlighted two:

- Suggestions for overcoming the difficulty of aligning (informal) practices with (formal) regulations;
- Suggestions for ensuring that Montenegro's accession to the EU is not too painful for the country's citizens.

2.2.4. *Feedback and follow up – potential for capacity building*

Again, worksheets (1 and 2) and follow up notes were distributed to all participants in order to capture the “output” indicated under phase 4 and 5 (Table 1). All three workshop participants filled out and returned the worksheets and follow-up notes.

Ms Mira Radulović, Head of Department for the Political System - Directorate for Legal Harmonisation with the Acquis, indicated that she would be interested to get information about how the transposition of the EU legislation affects informal practices (substitution – competition – accommodation – complementation). Specifically, she expressed interest in knowing in which domains of life (and to what extent) did the harmonization and transposition of EU rules and regulations a) lead to substantive changes in practices and procedures; and b) where the rules remained “empty shells”. She indicated the problem of illegal migrant workers, which can be seen as a part of “bad informality” (legal, economic consequences), but which at the same time serves as the “only survival strategy” available to many.

Next, Ms. Radulović suggested that the INFORM project should definitely be **focused on the area of agriculture**, an argument which was later complemented with the concern expressed by Ms. Tatjana Tomić, Secretary of the working group for chapters 1 and 6, Directorate for European Affairs. She stated that the “new rules” might introduce **new barriers** in economic activities (e.g., exchange of domestically produced food) that currently are not conducted in line with EU rules, but are an important part of not only the Montenegrin identity, but also of ways that enable individuals to survive economically. Ms. Tomić explicitly pointed out home cheese making and production of strong drinks. In this context Ms Violeta Berisaj, Head of Department for the Political Criteria and the Rule of Law (Directorate for European Affairs), indicated, that there is a clear **need for a more “tailored” approach** in a sense to allow those aspects of informality where its costs “on the ground” outweigh the benefits of formality “on paper”.

Lastly, all participants expressed that the workshop provided them with new knowledge and that they are looking forward of seeing the results of the INFORM project. In addition, they indicated **that findings from such projects, used with experience that they already have, can significantly help in making the transition/accession process easier.** They also stated that they are willing to help the INFORM project team in developing policy recommendations, so that the results from the project would indeed have an impact on policy processes.

2.3. Albania

2.3.1. Organizers/presenters for INFORM:

1. Ms. Armanda Hysa
2. Ms. Enriketa Pandelejmoni
3. Ms. Gentiana Kera
4. Ms. Brikena Balli

2.3.2. Participants

1. Ms. Stela Ademi- Directorate of Programming and Monitoring of EU Assistance, Ministry of European Integration
3. Ms. Lorela Simoni- Directorate of Programming and Monitoring of EU Assistance, Ministry of European Integration
4. Mr. Ervis Sulejmani- Directorate of Programming and Monitoring of EU Assistance, Ministry of European Integration
5. Ms. Brunilda Tushaj- Directorate of Programming and Monitoring of EU Assistance, Ministry of European Integration
6. Mr. Eduart Qatja- Directorate of Programming and Monitoring of EU Assistance, Ministry of Integration
7. Mr. Sokol Dedja- Directorate of European Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The workshop brought together INFORM project researchers from the Centre for Historical and Anthropological studies and representatives of the Ministry of Integration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.3.3. Participants' reflection on INFORM's topic(s) and aim(s)

After the presentation of aims and research topics and methods of the INFORM project, participants argued that the project offers a different perspective in comparison to various infrastructure projects



and stressed the importance of the INFORM project for understanding the impact of new laws on everyday life of citizens; for understanding the impact of laws on everyday life of citizens; for understanding what works/ or not works and why.

It was generally expressed that the project can produce important data/input for state institutions, that it can increase the cooperation between state institutions, academia and civil society. Moreover, it was indicated that concrete recommendations based on research results could actually help in closing the gap between formal and informal institutions.

2.3.4. Feedback and follow up – potential for capacity building

One point that was virtually universally expressed by all participants was that **informal practices are often more effective because laws are often prepared without taking into consideration social and economic conditions of society**. This was then followed by a shared belief that that research like INFORM, would help to overcome gaps between formal and informal practices.

Next, it was suggested that **the process of law drafting and approval should be gradual** and laws should be passed only following a careful analysis of their effects since laws approved too quickly can remain unimplemented.

Participants suggested that regarding chapters 23-24 related to the establishment of the rule of law, an important element to be considered is the conditionality of the Stabilisation and Association Process, since for these chapters the most important aspect is political conditionality, not concrete laws in respect with *acquis communautaire*.

In general, participants expressed great interest in concrete analysis of cases of informal practices that have become formal practices and also in the analysis of how formal rules leave space for informality. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the INFORM team would update the workshop participants with project findings, coming in the end of 2017 and 2018. Two of the participants will participate in the Conference in Bled in November 2017, all of them expressed willingness to participate in the second round of workshops to discuss the project results.

2.4. Serbia

2.4.1. Organizers/presenters for INFORM

1. Predrag Cveticanin, lead of the CESK team
2. Danijela Gavrilovic, senior researcher

2.4.2. Participants

1. Srđan Majstorović, Deputy Director
2. Ana Drljević, Department for Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU Funds and Development Aid
3. Nataša Savić Janjić, Department for Communication and Training
4. Vladimir Lazović, Department for Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU Funds and Development Aid

The first national meeting in Serbia was held in Belgrade, 7.6.2017, Nemanjina 34, on the premises of the Government of the Republic of Serbia European Integration Office, between the representatives of the aforementioned Office and the representatives of CESK.

The European Integration Office (hereinafter: SEIO) was established on 14 March 2004, as a Serbian Government service. SEIO prepares for adoption the acts of the Government designed for supervising, directing and harmonizing the activities of ministries and special organizations in relation to the European Union association and accession and formulates public information on the process of European Union accession and association.

SEIO also performs other activities in the domain of European Union accession and association as delegated to it by the Government. (<http://www.seio.gov.rs/eng/office/about-us/>)

2.4.3. Participants' reflection on INFORM's topic(s) and aim(s)

First, SEIO representatives indicated that the INFORM project seems of great importance, especially in the field of raising awareness about the problems regarding changes in the society and about frequently discussed but seldom researched obstacles to the implementation of the norms and standards of the EU. What they considered to be the most important and useful part of the research – this is also the part that they most strongly support –, has to do with the experiences of insiders – politicians, representatives of institutions, and experts taking part in the process itself and facing various problems.

In terms of participants' reflection on topics analyzed by the INFORM project, various issues were highlighted by the participants. In their opinion, one of the basic problems when it comes to the continuity of the implementation of the integration process in Serbia is the **high rate of staff turnover** in various governmental bodies and ministries, depending on the changes in the ruling political parties.



This situation is perceived to exist in the entire region that is being analysed by INFORM.

The second important problem is the **(non)existence of any true political will to bring about a change in the society, not only in terms of formal changes, but also in the legal norms where there is no willingness to overcome the gap between the *de iure* and *de facto* state of things**. For the integration process, it is of great importance whether the political elite considers it to be of essential importance for its own existence.

Another problem that the representatives of SEIO perceive is the **prolonged duration of the integration** process, which leads to a **decrease in the popularity** among the citizens and to a **lack of trust** in any benefits which may come as the result of the activities of the politicians involved in the realization of the process. This concern was not expressed in relation to Serbia only. Participants shared the same sentiment when it comes to the EU and its policy towards Serbia. Even though the integration process has undoubtedly been beneficial for the citizens of Serbia (visa liberalization for one thing), that is

quickly forgotten and is considered “normal”. “Fatigue” occurs among the citizens and there is a decrease in the popularity of the EU. Even among young people, who although generally supportive, are becoming more and more sceptical as they are faced with a **lack of perspective and security**.

2.4.4. *Feedback and follow up – potential for capacity building*

Participants expressed what was also indicated at other workshops – that there is great potential for building capacity – INFORM can bring new, empirically supported insights into barriers/gaps, that arise in the transposition of EU rules, SEIO can offer practical experience regarding the integration process - in formulating the recommendations and measures for the successful implementation of the integration process. Specifically, SEIO members suggested that the continuity which the office has had in its current activities and processes as a part of the integration of Serbia is a good experiential basis for a successful collaboration. On the other hand, they indicated that INFORM project could also help in building a strong empirical and theoretical base for policymaking and for raising awareness. In addition, they expressed a strong belief that INFORM can also offer means to construct a strategy for promoting the standards and norms of the EU, since it is valuable to be familiar with the practices and opinions regarding the integration process in a deeper and more essential way.

At the very beginning they offered help with the **dissemination of the INFORM research findings**. With the aim of more extensive dissemination of the results and their possible influence on the integration process in Serbia, they recommended a collaboration with the following institutions and associations: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, YUKOM, the National Convention on the EU, Belgrade Center for Security Policy...

It is their experience that the citizens trust non-profit sources, and in that sense the dissemination of the INFORM findings could play an important role in presenting the current state of affairs, and also in the way in which negative practices could be overcome. Their experience also indicates that the citizens are aware of the existence of corruption and that they do not condone it; however, the important question is the following one: “Why do they still allow these forms of behaviour to take place and why do they take part in them?” INFORM might help answer this key question.

The general recommendation given to the representatives of INFORM was to **organize extensive presentations of findings** of various forms of research and to attempt to present the findings to the representatives of the government, with the aim of raising awareness about the actual social climate in Serbia and the activities required to overcome “bad informality”. They believe that despite the prolonged duration of these processes in Serbia, raising awareness about values is still an important process that needs to be realized.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the following meeting was to take place in September, when the preliminary findings of the INFORM research (of various forms) would be presented to the SEIO representatives, and when an agreement on the participation of the SEIO representatives at the conference in Bled (Slovenia, November 2017) would be reached. There was also a show of willingness for joint collaboration on the recommendations for a more successful implementation of the EU integration process in Serbia.

2.5. Macedonia

2.5.1. Organizers/presenters for INFORM

1. Ilina Mangova
2. Ivan Damjanovski
3. Misha Popovikj

2.5.2. Participants

1. Dragan Tilev, State Councilor, Secretariat for European Affairs
2. Hristina Konevska Beroska, Secretariat for European Affairs
3. Aleksandar Zafirovski, Secretariat for European Affairs
4. Frosina Tasevska, Ministry of Justice
5. Tatjana Veta, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy

The first national consultative workshop of INFORM with the National offices for EU integration, Macedonia, was organized on 7 June 2017. The invitation was sent to the following institutions: Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economy,

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy did not attend the workshop even though their participation was earlier confirmed. The representative of the Ministry of Economy did not confirm participation due to the recent election of the government and change of minister of economy.

2.5.3. *Participants' reflection on INFORM's topic(s) and aim(s)*

All participants expressed that the workshop provided them with new knowledge and that the project addresses many issues that are directly associated with the association and enlargement process. Next, discussion about the “gaps” and problems attached to the process of transposition of EU rules, identified one of the key issues acknowledged by the participants – when thinking about rule harmonization **political leverage is the most important factor**. Namely, as the transpositioning by the countries is done on a voluntary basis, the only leverage is in the political success. It was then suggested that many problems in this regard arise because **there is no enforcement pressure by EU**. In addition, it was also suggested **that there is problem of credibility of the integration process** - the implementation and enforcement are both stronger when the integration process has credibility. Participants gave following specific examples to support their arguments:

- Bulgaria and Romania have recidivisms of informality, however the process there is much stronger as it was supported with resources and it had an end point.
- On the other hand, **the Western Balkan states do not seem to have a perspective for those who are negotiating, this leads to lethargy and regression of the process.**
- If there is an EU perspective, the country will accept the acquis, it will implement it through the institutions and that will eventually lead to change of habits. The new member states have more infringement procedures, and in the long-term that will lead to implementation of the law and changes in people's habits.

In sum, it was indicated that **there is no motivation for transposition when the country is far from EU membership or/and if there are no funds to support implementation and enforcement**. It is especially difficult when it comes to the “soft acquis” as then inadequate solutions are being created. **Education/raising awareness** in this regards is very important.

It is necessary that there is constant pressure from the Commission, from the special directorates, and to some extent the current situation is a result of the decline in that pressure. Participants also pointed out that the **motivation of the people who work on the process** is key for advancement of the process.

The capacity of the administration is also a key, **the current criteria are flawed and the systematization of the Agency for administration is ineffective. Many capable and educated administration staff have left the institutions.** The Commission has a key role and it should participate in the process, and they are uninterested now. New self-screening of the institutions is necessary. They also pointed out that **the state administration needs assistance through concrete policy papers and recommendations.**

The participants noted that it is necessary for Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) to be equipped with properly trained staff, that a date for the start of negotiations should be set, to see what are the capacities of all sectors and other institutions; to do self-screening, even though one self-screening had already been done, a new one is needed.



Sustainability of the system and retention policy is needed, it should not be allowed for a change of the party in power to affect the people who work on EU integration. The participants raised complaints that there is no reward system and **there is need for a reward system for a “job well done” to be put in place.** It is also **difficult to push the process forward when there is a constant change of personnel, not only at the national level, but also at the level of the Commission.** This makes the job more difficult as one has to introduce the new people to the process/has to be introduced to new people. In other words, organizational instability creates many “costs”, most notably in terms of communication and coordination.

2.5.4. *Feedback and follow up – potential for capacity building*

After all the materials were gathered, the feedback concerning the potential for capacity building conveyed the following message - there is a clear need for the **Regulatory Impact Assessment rules to be respected and that there should be stronger cooperation with the expert community**, i.e. universities, the academic community, professional associations, think tanks and NGOs. The absence of expert personnel

in the ministries creates a need for help from the academic community. In this respect projects like INFORM are clearly needed and should be operationalized in a way, that includes **constant communication between researchers, research work and policy makers**. In this regard, participants gave a concrete suggestion - beside DG-NEAR and national representatives, communication activities should include representatives of the EU Delegation, NGOs, and members of other national government institutions (Parliament, Secretariat for legislation, etc.). In their opinion this is the only path toward greater awareness of issues, challenges and solutions.

Next, it was pointed out that the project **should take in consideration the “political moment”** as a starting point to detect the “grey zones”; that is should focus more on macroeconomic policies as those two moments shape national and supra-national political processes. Lastly, all participants expressed great interest in attending the second round of workshops in order to see the empirical results and to discuss and help in formulating concrete policy recommendations, including those that would close dysfunctional gaps.

2.6. Kosovo

2.6.1. Organizers/presenters for INFORM

1. Vjollca Krasniqi, Social Research Kosovo
2. Teuta Osmani, Social Research Kosovo

2.6.2. Participants

1. Mr Artan Çollaku, Director, Department of Coordination of the Stabilization and Association Process
2. Ms Vjosa Beqaj, Director, Department of Sectoral Policies, Ministry of European Integration
3. Ms Hazbije Krasniqi, Head of the Central Office for International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
4. Mr Kenan Tora, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Mr Stergios Tragoudas, Task Manager-Education, European Union Office to Kosovo
6. Ms Mimoza Zeqiri, European Union Office to Kosovo
7. Mr Dukagjin Pupovci, Executive Director, Kosovo Education Center
8. Mr Dren Berishaj, Social Research Kosovo

As indicated in the introduction, the first INFORM National consultative workshop in Kosovo was held on 6 July 2017 in Pristina, hosted by the Social Research Kosovo. As can be seen from the participants' list, the invitation was sent to different institutions with the goal to engage in dialogue with the representatives of national mechanisms and offices for European integration and other relevant stakeholders on issues related to transposition of EU *acquis communautaire* in Kosovo; to gather insights on the methodology and approaches to the study of informality in Kosovo.

2.6.3. Participants' reflection on INFORM's topic(s) and aim(s)

During the workshop, the Ministry representatives engaged in discussions about the project outline, methodology as well as the political and cultural context in Kosovo. Specifically, participants have placed much importance and interest in understanding the interplay between formal rules and informal practices, and how this affects the implementation of laws and influences the sphere of economy, politics, and everyday life.



Next, participants acknowledged Kosovo's political challenges in the processes of the EU integration. They placed much value on research based policy making and perceive the INFORM project as an important resource offering data to enable a better understanding of the economic, political and social dynamics of Kosovo in relation to EU integration. Moreover, participants expressed the importance of gaining more knowledge on the impact of new laws on the everyday lives of citizens.

Regarding the topics discussed, participants from Kosovo identified following issues when thinking about the transposition of EU rules:

- Uncertainty and no timeline for EU membership of Kosovo.
- Weak rule of law enforcement/no monitoring.
- Budgetary limitations needed for implementation of laws and regulations

2.6.4. *Feedback and follow up – potential for capacity building*

The representatives at the meeting expressed their interest in the INFORM project, provided valuable feedback, and expressed willingness for future collaboration.

Participants identified potential areas for future cooperation, which included the following:

- Share research findings and disaggregated data with the state institutions, civil society, academia, media and the broader public in Kosovo in order to heighten awareness;
- Enhance cooperation between state institutions, academia, and civil society;
- Foster dialogue on how to close the gap between formal and informal institutions; and
- Develop policy recommendations grounded on research data on how to overcome informality.
- Sharing knowledge on how formal rules leave space for informality in politics, economy, and everyday life.
- Building empirical evidence to inform policy making
- Facilitating public discussions on informality with policy makers, civil society and academia
- Providing access to key informants/policy makers for interviews and data

3. MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The feedback gathered provided a clear indication that such workshops offer not only a strong potential for capacity building of researchers and policy makers, but represent an important step towards bridging what is frequently identified as the gap between research and policy.

Next, the feedback gathered provided some important insights in to how officials, who are directly involved in accession/enlargement process at the national level, perceive the problems that are the focus of the INFORM project. In this context, a couple of observations deserve highlighting and further elaboration (each observation is followed by examples that were taken directly from the discussion).

2.7. Key observations

2.7.1. *EU rules are often detached from the realities in Western Balkan countries*

It was suggested that gaps, understood as a state of incompleteness, cannot be understood only in the context suggested by DGNEAR representatives (e.g., lack of service mentality at the level of national institutions, low awareness and motivation, poor coordination between institutions, low efficiency; see Report on First DGNEAR consultative workshop)³. Participants, coming from different countries and different institutions, suggested that gaps are also the consequence of the fact that **EU rules are often at odds with informal institutions in the country, strongly grounded in a culture and as such contextualized as something that “stood the test of time”**. In other words, there was a strong sentiment that EU acquis assumes a quite indifferent position toward the existing and already regulated practices (regulated with “indigenized” formal and informal institutions) that are not always “bad”/ “dysfunctional” (from a national perspective). In sum, it was suggested that **disregard of existing informal institutions as well as people’s (low) resources leads to lack of implementation/enforcement**. Typical comments of participants included:

- EU rules are not always grounded in informal institutions in the country. Because of this, the implementation of adopted rules is often missing, thereby creating the ground for emergence of informal practices and institutions.
- There is a clash between the EU institutional way of accomplishing tasks and local traditions.
- People (of Montenegro) need to invest a lot of resources in order to comply with various EU rules and regulations.
- “New rules” might introduce new barriers in economic activities
- Informal practices are often more effective because laws are often prepared without taking into consideration social and economic conditions of society.
- The process of law drafting and approval should be gradual.

The relevance of expressed “disconnect” can be fully understood when tied to what was also indicated by participants to be a key issue surrounding “the gaps” – the issue of **credibility and trust** in the formal institutions and rules. Namely, it is very hard to achieve credibility and trust in something that feels disconnected from reality of everyday life; in something that does yield visible results. Again,

3

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/documents/download?documentIds=080166e5af22ec6f:Attachment_0&appId=SYGMA

participants acknowledged the fact that many problems concerning trust and credibility can be linked directly to inefficiency of institutions at the national level. However, it was also suggested that there is a problem at the EU level. This was clearly indicated by Macedonian officials who stated that the **poor implementation and enforcement of EU rules cannot be understood without acknowledging that there is a problem of credibility of the integration process**, e.g., there is no motivation for transposition when the country is far from EU membership or/and if there are no funds to support implementation and enforcement.

2.7.2. State administration and politics is often too weak

Many participants indicated that state/public administration is too weak to effectively implement and/or negotiate the adoption of EU rules in terms of accommodating them to domestic values and norms. **The high rate of staff turnover is one of the key problems in this regard, followed by low awareness, low motivation and low resources.** Typical comments of participants included:

- State institutions were not able to negotiate more accommodating implementation phases and deadlines than those proposed by the EU.
- When thinking about rule harmonization the political leverage is the most important.
- A problem is also constant change of personnel, not only at the national level, but also at the level of the Commission.
- {Problematic} high rate of staff turnover in various governmental bodies and ministries is dependent on the changes in the ruling political parties.
- Due to poor advocacy and raising awareness strategies, the rationale of why certain rules should be implemented is often lost, consequently eroding the trust in institutions that try to implement those rules.
- Motivation of the people who work on the process is often low/there is no motivation for transposition when the country is far from EU membership or/and if there are no funds to support implementation and enforcement.
- Limited budget/not enough resources for implementation of laws and regulations.

2.7.3. State administration and politics need stronger support from experts and academia

The fact, that almost all participants expressed that the workshop provided them with new knowledge and that they are all looking forward of seeing the results of the INFORM project indicated **that empirical research, used with experience of public officials, can significantly help in making the transition/accession process easier (raising awareness, strengthening)**. In other words, there was a strong sentiment that

state officials need strong support from research, but this research **should be operationalized in concrete policy recommendations**. Typical comments of participants included:

- State administration needs assistance through concrete policy papers and recommendations.
- There should be stronger cooperation with the expert community.
- Building empirical evidence is needed to inform policymaking.

2.7.4. EU rules tend to have a bad public image; they are often perceived as meaningless or inefficient

Participants often expressed that problem of poor implementation public could also be related to the rather **poor image of EU rules**; that **more effort should be directed towards promotion** of European integration. Namely, people will stop following rules not only if following them does not yield promised results (whatever they may be); if following brings more costs than benefits; if following shatters something that works as a source of stability while not providing a substitute for that source – it is enough if the perception of what ensues from rule adoption and following them, is “bad”. In this sense, the existence (or turn towards) informality can be seen as something that brings stability into people’s lives, challenged by the fragmented and fluid nature of today’s ever-changing reality; as something that works as a survival strategy, that helps people to cope with stresses of everyday life, brought by perceived or real inadequacies of formality to secure people’s physical, economic, social and legal security. In other words, for successful transposition of EU rules, trust and credibility is needed and this can only be achieved when it is clear that the adoption of these rules will benefit the public and that this is clearly communicated. **Education/raising awareness** in this regard is very important, together with efforts to **shape the formal rules in line with the one and only legitimate political goal – to provide citizens with physical, economic, social and legal security** (i.e., to relieve them of anything that could support the image that they are meaningless, that they support particularistic interests etc.). Typical comments of participants included:

- The rationale of why certain rules should be implemented is often lost, consequently eroding trust in the institutions that try to implement those rules.
- Public debates concerning the adoption of EU rules (and EU in general) are often not appropriate. As a consequence, they on average attract low interest from the citizens and public.
- More should be done concerning ways to promote European integration - this could help narrow the gap between formal and informal institutions.

- Citizens are aware of the existence of corruption and that they do not condone it; however, the important question is the following one: “Why do they still allow these forms of behaviour to take place and why do they take part in them?”

2.7.5. Prolonged duration of the integration process has a detrimental effect on Europeanization; pressure and support from the EU are seen almost as the only real hope for such changes

Participants indicated the absence of a clear timeline, perceived mainly as a manifestation of **“enlargement fatigue,” is eroding trust and motivation** for transposing EU rules, and for change in general. This is further exacerbated by lack of monitoring. This was also recognized by DGNEAR officials, who suggested that an important part of the problem (in regard to inefficiency of state public administration) lies in the fact that many public officials have no motivation to fulfil their roles because they doubt in the result; that this motivation is then further eroded after outside pressure disappears. For example., when certain chapter is closed, after there is no outside supervision and evaluation, “old habits” come back (case of Croatia - after joining the EU, many reforms, rules became “empty shells” “old habits” came back). As indicated by two speakers, this is also related to the fact that certain reform efforts (and their potential effects) are not communicated well enough. Typical comments of participants included:

- Prolonged duration of the integration process leads to a decrease in popularity among the citizens and to a lack of trust in any potential benefits.
- “Fatigue” occurs among the citizens and there is a decrease in the popularity of the EU. Even among young people.
- {The main problem is} uncertainty and no timeline for EU membership of Kosovo
- Many problems in this regard arise because there is no enforcement pressure by EU, including the problem of credibility of the integration process.
- If there is an EU perspective, the country will accept the acquis/it will implement it through the institutions and that will eventually lead to change of habits.
- There is no motivation for transposition when the country is far from EU membership or/and if there are no funds to support implementation and enforcement.
- It is necessary that there is constant pressure from the Commission.
- The problem is weak rule of law enforcement and absence of monitoring.

2.8. Key takeaways for the INFORM project

1. Focus on examining reasons behind discrepancies between formal and informal rules and behind poor implementation of the formal rules.
 - Analysis of how (and why) formal rules leave space for informality.
 - Focus on the question of access to various resources – for example, computers that would allow farmers to read local and EU regulations.
 - Formulate suggestions for overcoming the difficulty of aligning (informal) practices with (formal) regulations.
 - Focus on why people turn to informality - for example, is it a part of their survival strategy, culture, lack of trust?
 - Organize extensive presentations of findings, focus on policy recommendations, including those aimed at the EU policy.

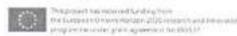
2. Find and present concrete examples of dismantling negative informality and formalizing positive informality.
 - Identification of positive informality and ways to formalize it.
 - Concrete analysis of cases of informal practices that have become formal practices.
 - Examples/mechanism of how EU rules helped in dismantling negative informality.

3. Find and suggest ways for promotion of EU integration, as well as work on such promotion as part of the project.
 - Citizens trust non-profit sources, and in that sense the dissemination of the INFORM findings could play an important role in presenting the current state of affairs.
 - Analyzing ways to promote European integration better, as in participants' opinion this could help narrow the gap between formal and informal institutions.
 - Building a strong empirical and theoretical base for policymaking and for raising awareness
 - Offer means to construct a strategy for promoting the standards and norms of the EU.

4. Intensify contacts with policy makers and offer support.
 - Communication activities should include representatives of the EU Delegation, NGOs, and members of other national government institutions (Parliament, Secretariat for legislation, etc.).

4. PARTICIPANTS LIST

2.9. Bosnia and Herzegovina

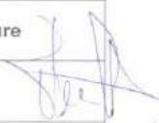
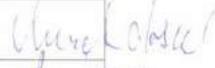
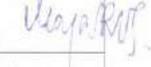
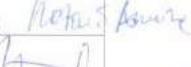


First DG-NEAR Workshop LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

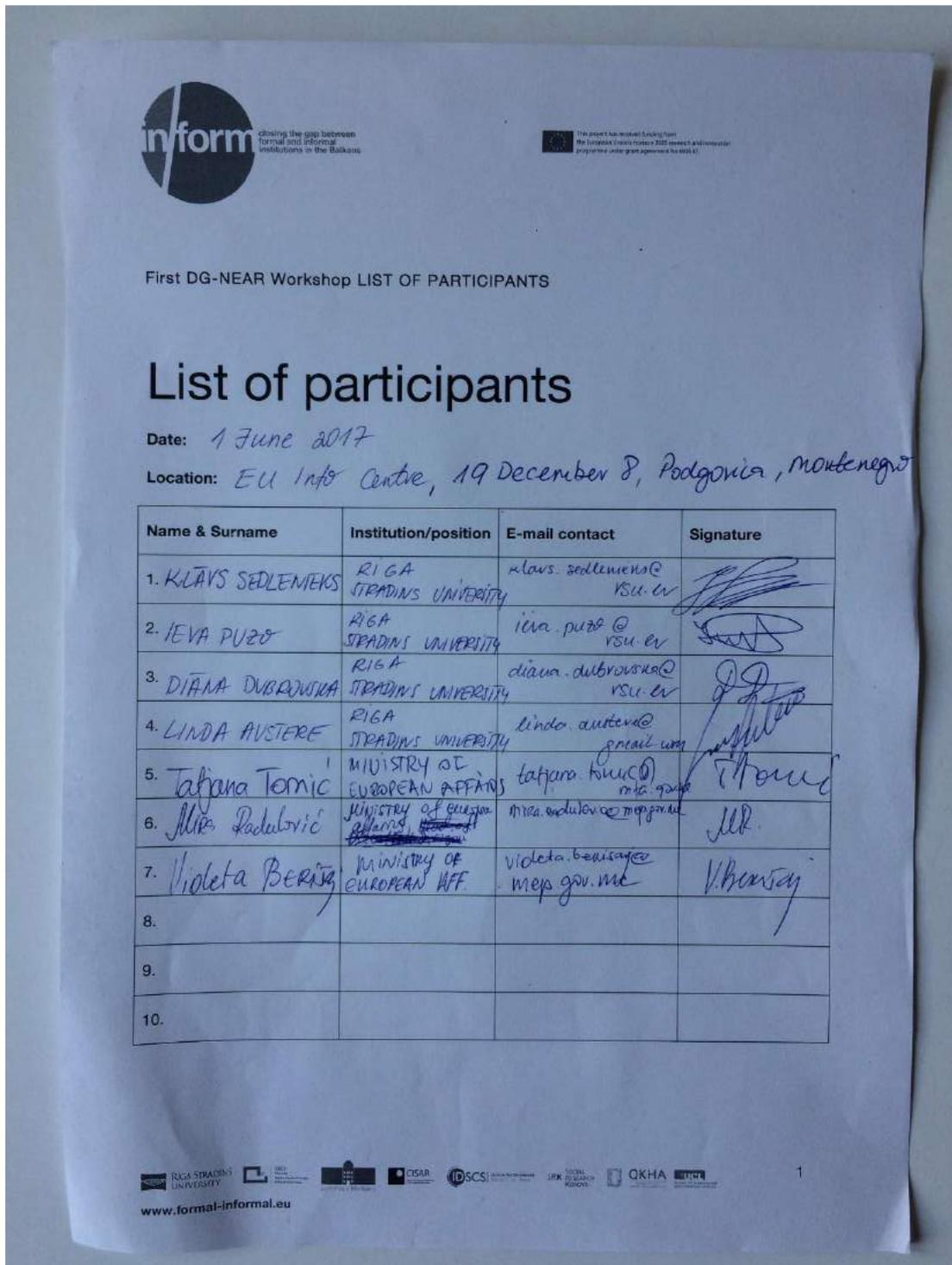
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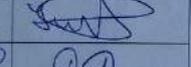
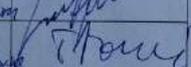
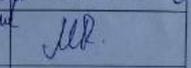
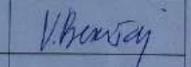
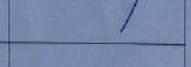
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First DG-NEAR Workshop LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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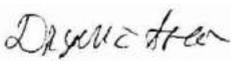
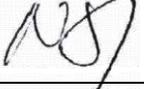
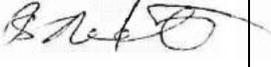
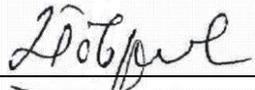
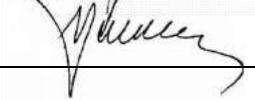
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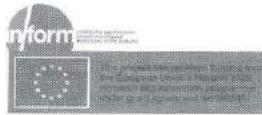


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FIRST National Workshop LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Лист на учесници

Датум: 7 јуни 2017

Место: Скопје




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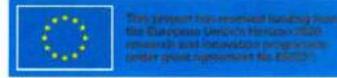
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