

NEWSLETTER

April 2007

Center for Research and Policy Making

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Dear Sir/Madam,

The Center for Research and Policy-Making (CRPM, www.crpm.org.mk) is proud to present some of its most recent accomplishments. In our policy papers you can read about the new Citizens guide to budgets published by CRPM, here you will find and few more texts about reforms in the health care services in Macedonia, The Macedonian banking system and changes in regulations, process of policy making in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, migration flows in Macedonia, mandatory religious education shall be introduced in the public elementary schools and final is the text about policy making and transparent budgeting trainings for the units of local self- government.

Sincerely yours.
Center for Research and Policy Making

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CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO BUDGETS

What is our money spent on and how? The answer can be found in the long-awaited Budget Guide that we prepared in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The Guide contains chapters on budget substance and structure; budget procedures (preparation, adoption and execution) and control mechanisms, budget monitoring that is. The latter, among other things, explains the role of citizens in that very process. The Budget Guide stems from the comprehension that up till now there has been no way to obtain all budget-related information in Macedonia at one and the same place. From now on, such a thing becomes possible – owing to the work of CRPM. In addition to filling up the identified information gap, the Budget Guide aims at providing knowledge on public finances and budget activities as well as putting a stress on the need for public attentiveness in the course of budget making and spending. Beneath of it all there lies the intention to motivate the citizenry to engage actively in the budget process and accordingly – to hold a sway over the budget makers and executors, in the direction of attaining more efficient and conscious use of public revenues. The Guide has been prepared in two versions – in Albanian and Macedonian language.

THE MACEDONIAN BANKING SYSTEM AND CHANGES IN REGULATIONS

After 15 years of monetary independence, we've just witnessed the first ever entry of a renown commercial bank on the Macedonian market; the famous Société Générale has bought Ohridska Banka. CRPM would like to believe that this acquisition marks the beginning of the end of an era brimful of mediocre banking practices applied by local financial institutions and foreign banks with "local corporate culture." Inspired by this event, CRPM embarked upon making an analysis of the current state of affairs in the Macedonian banking system and the solutions stipulated in the new Law on Banks. What's underway on the financial market? A process of liberalization maybe? What's the linkage among the legal framework, efficiency and trust in the domestic banking sector? What are the legal provisions that contain the seeds of abuse?

Reforming the Health Care Services in Macedonia

CASE STUDIES: SKOPJE, TETOVO, SVETI NIKOLE AND NEGOTINO

The majority of Macedonian citizens tends to perceive the primary health sector as nothing but a road that has to be passed through in order to reach the ends – and those are the services provided by the secondary and tertiary health institutions in the country. Our policy study makes an attempt at unearthing the causes of such a trend. Why don't the patients seek health treatments at a primary level? Is it that they invest more trust in physicians that operate at secondary and tertiary levels? ...Or perhaps the primary-level physicians are not motivated enough to provide services, so they simply refer the patients to the next level of health protection? Can it be that the very health system at large is positioned so as to kindle referrals? Is there a way to improve the Macedonian Health System in terms of a more adequate distribution of services among different healthcare levels? In addition, the study makes a review of public health conditions in Macedonia and the municipalities under consideration; elaborates on the organizational structure of Macedonian Health system and the services provided and finally – draws conclusions, offering recommendations on how to overcome the existing situation. The policy study is available at our web-site, in Macedonian and English language.

THE PROCESS OF POLICY-MAKING IN THE MACEDONIAN GOVERNMENT

CRPM was commissioned by the General Secretariat of the Government to hold a three-day training on the policy-making process to officials from all ministries. The training focused on ascertaining the need for policy-making and assessing the necessity for bringing about governmental measures; circumscribing the possible solutions; making an impact assessment and calculating the costs for each of the options; assessing and improving the options; selecting the best option and finalizing the proposal; presenting and explaining the selected option; implementing, monitoring and evaluating; filling out the Memorandum for the Government. Further details on the training can be found at our web-page.

MIGRATION FLOWS IN MACEDONIA

CRPM was selected to produce the Macedonian Chapter of the regional project “Migration Flows in South-Eastern Europe,” supported by Comité Catholique Contre la Faim et Pour le Développement and Balkan Trust for Democracy and coordinated by the Group 484 from Belgrade, Serbia. During the work on the Chapter, CRPM succeeded to identify sixteen major migration flows which had taken place on Macedonian territory in the course of the last one hundred years; determine the impact thereof; analyze in detail the recent developments and the legal framework concerning migrations; construct a profile of the average Macedonian emigrant; and finally present several real-life stories depicting the migration flows in Macedonia. Upon its completion, CRPM presented the Chapter on the regional conference, organized in Belgrade and attended by many prominent protagonists of the European political and scientific life. The Chapter, its Power Point presentation as well as details on the conference agenda and participants can be found at our web-page.

MANDATORY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SHALL BE INTRODUCED IN THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS...

This was stated by the Minister of Education and Science a couple of weeks ago. He added that the pupils would be able to choose between two options – history of religions or classic religious education. The latter, for the time being, offers studying one of the two biggest religions in the country – Orthodox Christianity or Islam. This proposal has been recently enacted into a law. The previous attempt at introducing religious teaching in the system of public education did not pass the constitutional muster. What will happen to the new one? What is the Constitutional Court going to say this time? Our estimation can be found on our web.



POLICY-MAKING AND TRANSPARENT BUDGETING IN THE UNITS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

This is actually a series of training sessions planned to be realized in seven regions throughout Macedonia by the end of the year. Its aim is to bring the policy-making process closer to the municipal workers, the NGO sector and all other interested parties; familiarize the budget monitoring methods and techniques; and encourage the citizenry to engage actively in the budget processes. The first of the seven sessions took place on April 13-14, 2007 in Skopje, preceded by official launching of the Budget Guide. The training topics and accompanying materials can be found on our web.

That is all from this edition of CRPM newsletter. Stay tuned with CRPM at www.crpm.org.mk. All news will be published on our web site.

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