



## Newsletter No. 1

EURASIA-Net (Europe-South Asia Exchange On Supranational (Regional) Policies and Instruments for the Promotion of Human Rights And The Management Of Minority Issues) is a joint research project run by universities, research centres and NGOs based in Europe and in South Asia (European Academy – EURAC, Italy; Brunel University, UK; Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, India; South Asian Forum for Human Rights, Nepal; Democratic Commission for Human Development, Pakistan; University of Dhaka, Bangladesh). The project aims to enhance European and South Asian cooperation on the issues of regional integration and supranational instruments for the promotion and protection of human and minority rights. In the frame of the project, two transregional summer schools were planned, one of which took place in Bolzano/Bozen (Italy) at the end of August 2008. The lectures of the Summer School have touched many themes, amongst which international standards on minority and human rights in Europe and South Asia (including the role of SAARC), soft law mechanisms of minority protection and their possible dissemination in South Asia, concepts of federalism and autonomy, media and human rights, indigenous rights and ethnic diversity both in Europe and Asia.

*Read more about the First Transregional Summer School, the topic of Media and Human Rights in South Asia, news and publications in the next pages of this first EURASIA-Net project Newsletter!*

Summer Schools

Project Publications

Media & HR

News

EUROPÄISCHE  
AKADEMIE

ACCADEMIA  
EUROPEA

EUROPEAN  
ACADEMY

BOZEN - BOLZANO



## Summer Schools

The First Transregional summer school took place in Bolzano/Bozen (Italy), between 25 August - 6 September 2008.

Out of almost 100 applications, 18 candidates (researches, civil servants, media fellows, human rights activists) dealing with human and minority rights issues from Europe (Finland, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Romania, Denmark, Ukraine and Turkey) and South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal) have been selected and invited to participate in the summer school.



During the 10 working days of the Summer School the participants have been offered a wide range of activities: lectures, workshops, case studies, group work, study visit as well as an excursion.

In the frame of the summer school programme two public events have been organized:

1) Public Lecture on "Monitoring racism and discrimination against ethnic and religious groups across the European Union: the work of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)" by Mr. Ioanis N. Dimitrakopoulos (Head of FRA Unit on Research & Data Collection) on Thursday, 28 August.



2) Panel discussion on "South Asian cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity as a field of experience for future diversity management in Europe?" (Giovanni Poggeschi, Gabriel N. Toggenburg, Tapan Kumar Bose, Samir Kumar Das) on Tuesday, 2 September.

## Summer Schools – impressions by students



The summer school was not just a great experience for me professionally but also personally. A wide range of lecturers, beautiful settings, thorough organization and

inspiring fellow participants and, especially, the comparative perspective made my two weeks in Bolzano a personal success story. As one of the few European participants, I was familiar with the European standards on minority rights protection whereas the South Asian situation was completely new to me. It was interesting to see how the European context is focused on ethnic and linguistic groups while religion and caste take a much more prominent role in South Asia. I especially liked the inputs by the participants themselves and would have supported even more such contribution. Once again, I got reminded of how strongly interlinked minority issues are to achieving peace and to conflict prevention, an interlinkage that I think is strengthened by this year's Nobel Peace Prize laureate, our former president Martti Ahtisaari. Personally it was also interesting to get to know the South Tyrol autonomy better, which provided me a good comparison to my own home, the Åland Islands and its autonomy. I still have very much to learn, especially about South Asia, but I am inspired and grateful to everybody involved, for contributing to a wonderful minority experience!

*Petra Granholm, Åland Islands Peace Institute (Finland)*



During my LLM at Essex I had become increasingly convinced of the importance of not only regional cooperation but also of dealing with minority

issues effectively in order to prevent gross violations of human rights and worse armed conflicts. There is an absence of any regional human rights framework in South Asia and this is of specific concern to me owing to my British Pakistani identity and nationality. Thus when I saw the brief for the EURASIA-Net Project, it had an immediate and deeply personal resonance. This was especially rewarding for me to observe as I was the only participant with belonging to both regions. The highlight of the Summer School was interacting with a spectrum of nationalities and disciplines. I learnt that the first and most important step in addressing an integral problem between groups is to bring them in close proximity of each other, for them to discuss their differences face to face. I had an amazing time intellectually and socially, forming what I believe to be life-long friendships with awe-inspiring individuals. I am committed passionately to the aims of the program and I feel EURASIA-Net is only the beginning.

*Murtaza Shaikh, Student LLM (University of Essex) and collaborator Minority Rights Group (London)*



A visit to EURAC is one of the best achievements I have had ever in my life. Ever since my inclusion in the participants' list of the summer school programme

through a hard competition I felt thrilled and excited. Immediately after touching down at Milano Malpensa airport I could guess how my visit would be. A man from a developing country to a developed country. The train journey from Milano Central to Bolzano was full of new experiences. Always there was a fear whether I would be able to reach the right destination. But the arrangements were excellent, and I reached safely Bolzano. The beautiful city surrounded by high mountains symbolises a model for every country in the world. It is a very disciplined city not shy of accommodating a large number of immigrants. I was specially surprised by to notice the presence of a strong Bangladeshi community doing business there. The South Tyrol is rich in many ways because its farmers and labours are evaluated with a difference. The democracy practiced here is unique. From some single attitudes we have many things to learn. I have found reflections of many ideas expressed during our summer school programme in the life of Bolzano. Bolzano has a rhythm of peaceful coexistence which will have a great impact on our thoughts.

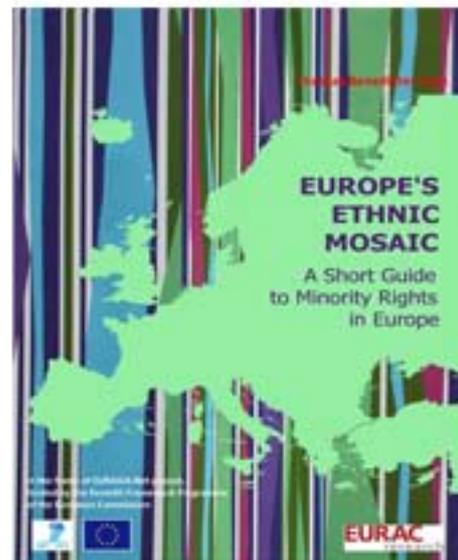
*Dr. Kamaluddin Ahmed, Associate Professor,  
University of Chittagong (Bangladesh)*

## Project Publications

All the Project Publications can be freely downloaded from our website!

Visit it at: [www.eurac.edu/eurasia-net](http://www.eurac.edu/eurasia-net)

Last publications:



**Thomas Benedikter (ed.), *Europe's Ethnic Mosaic*, (EURAC, Bolzano 2008)**

**Rautz, Tomaselli and Zabielska (eds.), *Material for Specialized Media*, (EURAC, Bolzano 2008)**

**Samir Das and Ranabir Samaddar, *Assessment of Research Policies and Resources*, (MCRG, Kolkata 2008)**

## Media & Human Rights

### *Tips for Media*



The mass media can play very important role in the promotion and protection of human rights in various means and ways; i.e. by dissemination of information about the existing and newly adopted international instruments on human rights; motivating people by creation of awareness about international protection; publishing, broadcasting and telecasting the comparative analysis of international and national legal provisions on human rights; revealing the non-compliance by the government with the international obligation of human rights; informing the people about the activities of human rights related NGO's and INGO's; and informing the people about all the incidents of gross violation of human rights by the government. On the contrary, the misleading and wrong information flowed by mass media always helps to violation human rights. Many governments are, in most cases, violators of human rights, and, tends to hide the incidents of violation of human rights. The mass media should therefore show and denounce the violations and, in doing so, contributing to the protection and the promotion of human rights.

*Mostafa Mahmud Naser, Assistant Professor  
University of Chittagong (Bangladesh)*

### *The media in our society*



In modern society one can not ignore the importance of mass media in development and protection of human rights, which influence large numbers of people like newspapers, magazines, radio and television. The media play an important role in promoting human rights. Thanks to free and independent media for a state gets harder and harder to conceal any violation of human rights committed by any functionary or department of the state because of effective reporting in the media. For the protection of human rights only free, independent and responsible media can protect human rights and minority rights in a democratic state. In a recent case two Ahmadis (Pakistani minority), a well renowned doctor and a business man, were killed in Pakistan because of a irresponsible reporting of a television program in which a religious scholar of a sect suggested that Ahmadis should be killed and host of the program agreed with him. Both murders were took place within an hour of the program, "Aalim on line" (Religious scholar on line) went on air. Irresponsible reporting is more dangerous then controlled media. Free and independent media is the full concept to achieve the protection and development of human rights and minority rights.

*Hussain Malik Jrar, Human rights lawyer and active member in the Human Right Commission for Pakistan*

## News

On 21 October 2008 a conference on *International Terrorism and Regional Security* has been organized by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) and Brunel University, Panel 4 on *Women's Rights and Religious Intolerance* under the premises of the Eurasia-Net project. More information at:

<http://www.biicl.org/events/view/-/id/273/>

On 2-3 October 2008 the Launching Conference of the High Commissioner's Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations took place at the European Academy Bolzano. More information at:

<http://www.osce.org/item/33388.html>

The sixth annual Winter Course on 'Forced Migration: Racism, Immigration and Xenophobia' organized by Calcutta Research Group, partner of EURASIA-Net, will be held in Kolkata (India) from 1 to 15 December 2008. More information at:

<http://www.mcrg.ac.in/wco5.htm>

New call for proposals under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission on Tolerance and cultural diversity (SSH-2009-3.3.1.), and Religion and secularism across Europe (SSH-2009-3.3.2.). More information at:

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.cooperationDetailsCallPage&call\\_id=152](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.cooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=152)

*A new call for applications will be launched soon for the second EURASIA-Net Transregional Summer School (to be organized in South Asia)!*

Visit our website at [www.eurac.edu/eurasia-net](http://www.eurac.edu/eurasia-net)

## Contacts

**Europe-South Asia Exchange On Supranational (Regional) Policies and Instruments for the Promotion of Human Rights And The Management Of Minority Issues (EURASIA-Net project)**



Funded by the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission

**Coordination:**

**Institute for Minority Rights  
European Academy (EURAC research)  
Bolzano/Bozen (Italy)**

**Scientific Coordinator:**

**Dr. Günther Rautz**

**Email: [minorities.autonomies@eurac.edu](mailto:minorities.autonomies@eurac.edu)**

**Website: [www.eurac.edu/eurasia-net](http://www.eurac.edu/eurasia-net)**

***EURASIA-Net newsletter***

***Editorial Staff***

Alexandra Tomaselli

***Design***

Ezhilarasi Ramalingam