

**Analysis of the second session of the Working Group „Social infrastructure“
of GaMCon – Gagauzian Modernization Convention**

The meeting of working group “Social infrastructure development” within the project GAMCON was held on 29 November – 1 December 2017 in Komrat. The working group meeting was preceded by the meeting with local expert - author of the documents “Strategy for supporting young families” and related “Action Plan”. The aim was to explain a wider context of the documents, discover related problems and role of key actors, as well as to reconcile mutual expectations regarding inputs and outputs for working group. Discussion focused also on developing detailed programme and activities of the forthcoming working group meeting (with several alternatives depending on number of participants).

The meeting of working group, held on 30 November 2017, was divided into three parts. Firstly, the document “Action plan of measures for support of young families” was presented by Anna Niagova. Then, my presentation followed, focusing on two areas: on the one hand on reflection of existing documents in the field of young families support, and on the other hand on presentation of experiences of developed welfare states (mainly the EU member states and, especially, Slovakia). After two presentations a discussion was opened. It was very enriching exchange of experiences and opinions that brought several very valuable suggestions and comments. The auditorium consisted of 30 persons with various professional backgrounds, including representatives of local government, representatives of local municipalities, experts from local authorities, social workers, and students from local university.

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The document “Plan of measures” specified more generally formulated intentions regarding support of young families that were described in the document “Strategy for supporting young families”. The document has a clear structure, relying on four types of interventions (analytical and forecasting activities, information activities, promoting jobs for adult members of young families and socio-pedagogical activities). Each type of activity was described in detail – its content, specific measures, responsibility of stakeholders and expected outcomes.

My presentation had two parts. Firstly I focused on strengths of presented document, as well as on challenges resulting from its preparation, with the aim to initiate discussion and promote participatory approach. The strengths of the document are as follows: multi-dimensional approach (effort to cover several relevant aspects of life of young families), imperative of cooperation of various stakeholders (i.e. an assumption of cooperation of actors from various institutional backgrounds, an aim to improve inter-sectorial communication and cooperation and increase information exchange between various sectors), and prioritization of social services for families, which are very often seen as less important than direct financial transfers in countries with “modernization gap”. As part of my reflection I offered several recommendations for strategic planning of young family support:

- To identify explicitly relationship between strategic documents prepared at local and central level.
- To prepare more detailed time schedule for action plan, with definition of clear sequence of steps and responsibility of actors.
- To define more specified targets – in quantitative terms if possible.
- To identify data sources necessary for analysis of current situation and searching for solutions.
- To develop set of social indicators for monitoring progress.
- To establish processes of social monitoring and evaluation.

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- To open discussion on basic principles of young family support and role of various actors (NGOs, informal networks – for example that of parents, young persons).

In the second part I presented experiences of the Slovak Republic and some EU member states in the field of family policy and young families support. I focused on three areas: financial transfers, services for families and tax credits. I showed institutional settings, key questions that must be answered, and possible solutions that are mostly preferred. Finally, I presented comparison of various outcomes of family policies, with the aim to show effects of various institutional configurations.

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