

Regional Governance Seminar Swiss Cooperation: Regional Development to Empower Municipalities

Wednesday, 16th of March, Skopje, Hotel Holiday Inn

Questions for the expert panel with:

Biljana Zvetanovska State Secretary in the Ministry of Local Self Government of Macedonia, and expert for Regional Development in Macedonia

Peter Heil Regional Development Expert with an EU perspective

14.00-15.45 (subsequent to the summary of the assessment findings by Sandra Boulos), moderated by Katharina Häberli Harker

Panel discussion topic 1 Vision building on Regional Development

- *Biljana first, as Peter will address the issue in the morning already* How should SDC deal with lacking **commitment/vision**? Is Regional Development possible without a national vision?
- What and how can local government, e.g. through **municipal associations**, contribute to the process of a development of a vision on RD? Can they make a difference?
- What are the incentives for **stakeholders on the local level** (government, councils, civil society, private sector) to participate in regional development?

Panel discussion topic 2 Legitimacy and functionality of regional level institutions

- **The intermediary (political/administrative) governance level** would have the political legitimacy to work on regional development; yet in the Balkans it is often weak or non-existent. Is that a deficiency with regards to RD? How to handle it?
- What is the role & potential of **Inter-Municipal Cooperation** to respond to geographically defined challenges and potentials (functional areas)?

Panel discussion topic 3 Adequate Financing of Regional Development

- What is an «adequate» volume of financing for RD?

- *Biljana first, as Peter will address the issue in the morning already* Financing is often seen as a **political reward**: How should SDC deal with that? How to make sure that equity and disparities are taken into account?
- If you had to summarize it in a nutshell (3 principles) What are **good practices** regarding financing for RD?

Panel discussion topic 4 Political commitment for Regional Development

- How would you measure political commitment for Regional Development in a certain country?
- Political commitment often relies on strong engagement of **very few high profile individuals**. How can the sustainability of this commitment be ensured?
- One third of the EU budget is reserved for cohesion funding in the member countries. Yet in the assessments the role of the **EU** (apart from Kosovo) was not mentioned prominently. Understandable? Positive? Unfulfilled potential?
- *Biljana first, as Peter will address the issue in the morning already* RD is often perceived as a **threat** to existing entities/government levels/actors: How should SDC deal with that?