

Central and Eastern Europe Local Government and Housing Privatization

Prepared for the Office of Housing and Urban Programs
Agency for International Development



ICMA Consortium Report

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International City/County Management Association
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**REPORT ON THE THIRD ANNUAL
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

FLORENCE, ITALY

March 3-6, 1993

Prepared for the Office of Housing and Urban Programs
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by

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BACKGROUND

The 3rd International Conference on Regional and Municipal Cooperation (ICRMC) took place in Florence, Italy during March 3-9, 1993. More than 450 participants representing 310 cities, local regions, and nongovernmental organizations from 58 countries met to discuss international cooperation between local government authorities. The International City /County Management Association (ICMA) was represented by Renata Frenzen.

The ICRMC originated in 1989 when a number of cities in the Netherlands combined to form the Platform for Local Peace Policy, and organized the 1st ICRMC conference to promote cooperation between Western European municipal and regional governments and their counterparts from the former Eastern Bloc. The conference took place in Rotterdam during May 1990, and attracted more than 500 participants representing local governments and political organizations from most European countries. The principal goal of the Rotterdam conference was to establish contacts between Western European local governments and the new democratic movements and organizations in the former Eastern bloc.

The success of the Rotterdam conference led to a second conference in Prague, Czechoslovakia during September 1991, attended by more than 1,000 participants from Western and Eastern Europe, plus representatives from several local governments in the United States. The purpose of the Prague conference was to reinforce and extend the contacts between local governments established during the Rotterdam conference, and to promote further international cooperation in economic development, social policy, and participatory democracy. The participants decided to invite representatives from developing countries to attend the next conference, which was scheduled to take place in Florence during early 1993.

FLORENCE CONFERENCE

The stated purpose of the 3rd ICRMC in Florence was to continue the discussion of international cooperation between local governments on an "East-West" basis, and to initiate a discuss of cooperation between local governments from developed and developing countries on a "North-South" basis.

The participants in the 3rd ICRMC included representatives from local government and nongovernmental organizations from the following countries (number of representatives): Albania (2), Argentina (1), Austria (6), Belgium (7), Bolivia (1), Botswana (1), Brazil (2), Bulgaria (6), Belarus (3), Cameroon (2), Chile (1), Costa Rica (2), Cuba (1), Cyprus (2), Czech Republic (28), Denmark (8), Egypt (1), Eritrea/Ethiopia (2), Finland (4), France

(24), Gabon (2), Germany (4), Greece (17), Hungary (12), Indonesia (3), Iran (2), Ireland (3), Italy (47), Ivory Coast (1), Lithuania (6), Mauritius (1), Montenegro/Yugoslavia (1), Nigeria (1), Norway (1), Oman (2), Pakistan (1), China (2), Peru (2), Poland (42), Portugal (2), Romania (20), Russia (33), Senegal (2), Slovakia (12), Slovenia (3), South Africa (5), Spain (18), Sudan (2), Sweden (3), Netherlands (29), Tunisia (2), Turkey (1), Ukraine (5), United Kingdom (7), Uruguay (1), United States (6), Venezuela (1), Yugoslavia (9), and Zimbabwe (1).

International organizations cosponsoring the 3rd ICFMC included the International Union of Local Authorities, the World Federation of United Cities, Sister Cities International, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Assembly of Regions in Europe, the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities, the Union of African Cities, the Union of Capitals in Portuguese-Speaking Countries, Metropolis, the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, and the World Federation of Cities for Peace.

Nearly 40 persons addressed the plenary sessions of the 3rd ICFMC. The speakers included Mr. V. Spini, Under Secretary, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. V. Popov, President, Russian Movement for Democratic Reform; the mayors or deputy mayors of Barcelona, Florence, Lisbon, Marseilles, Rotterdam, Sarajevo, St. Petersburg, Utrecht, and Warsaw; and representatives of the African National Congress, Chinese International Cities Association, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, and FMCU.

An additional 15 speakers (including ICMA's representative) described various international projects during the first day of the plenary session. ICMA's representative spoke about ICMA/USAID projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

INVITATION TO ICMA

Mr. Kees Bode, Executive member of the Conference Presidium, inquired whether ICMA would be interested in serving as a coorganizer of the 4th ICFMC, scheduled to take place in 1995. The high level of interest in ICMA's activities by the conference organizers was reflected in their decision to place ICMA's representative first on the list of speakers for the plenary session on international projects.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Discussions at the Florence conference centered on the possibility of international cooperation between local governments in social and environmental issues and the promotion of democracy. Many speakers expressed concern that the political

situation in Europe and elsewhere had become more unstable in recent years, resulting in greater injustice, violence, and human rights violations.

A special session of the conference focused on the potential role of local governments in improving living conditions and promoting peace. The participants stressed the need to find solutions to violent political conflicts in accord with the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. They noted that solidarity between local governments could help those harmed by political violence once peace had been restored.

CONCERN FOR SARAJEVO

The Mayor of Sarajevo spoke during the second day of the conference, and made a dramatic appeal for aid for his city. His appearance was followed by an intense discussion about the need for European local governments to take action to resolve the conflict in former Yugoslavia. The participants approved an amendment to the final declaration of the conference calling for aid for the people of Sarajevo.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Conference participants discussed the rapid growth in cooperative projects between local governments in Western countries and Eastern Europe since the Prague conference in 1991. This trend was viewed as evidence of the value of decentralized cooperation. The participants stressed the need for better coordination of projects, since virtually identical projects were being pursued by different local governments with no knowledge of each other's activities. The participants also stressed the need to maintain the continuity of projects for longer periods.

The participants agreed that cooperative projects did not necessarily need to be based on formal twin city agreements. Instead, they could originate through a process of supply and demand between local governments providing and needing services. Projects of this kind could be initiated by drawing up letters of agreement indicating the activities to be carried out and the period for performance. The participants thought that projects should be concrete, result-oriented, and focused on clearly defined and measurable goals whenever possible. In addition, they believed that it was important to inform local citizens about the projects in order to increase public understanding and support for such activities.

The participants reiterated the need for national governments and international organizations to recognize and support cooperative projects previously stated at both the Rotterdam and Prague

conferences. They pointed out that national and international recognition and support were particularly crucial in the case of projects in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. They also believed that the local governments providing assistance for these countries should expand their activities.

Finally, the conference participants expressed their desire to expand cooperation between local governments on a "North-South" basis, emphasizing that the "North" included countries from both the West and former Eastern Bloc. They agreed that a specific goal for new cooperative projects of this kind should be established. They also agreed that the next ICRMC conference should focus on exchanging information and facilitating contacts between local governments on a "North-South" basis.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

The ICMA representative at the Florence conference was able to meet and interact with a large number of local government officials and representatives of nongovernmental organizations interested in international cooperation. Many officials from Central and Eastern European cities and other organizations expressed a specific interest in obtaining technical assistance from ICMA/USAID. A list of these officials and their cities is attached (Appendix I).

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

The Florence conference proved to be an excellent forum for dialogue between local government officials interested in cooperating to solve common economic and social problems. These officials were able to interact and establish new contacts for future international cooperation. They were also able to meet representatives of nongovernmental organizations interested in promoting international cooperation between local governments.

Unfortunately, the conference working sessions on social policy, participatory democracy, and environmental policy were not well organized. There was little opportunity for group discussion, and the sessions did not arrive at clear conclusions about these admittedly complex issues. In fact, the conference was largely dominated by the plenary sessions, which did not always focus on the most important practical aspects of international cooperation. Nevertheless, the conference was an invaluable opportunity to contact many other individuals and organizations actively interested or involved in international cooperation.

APPENDIX I

Local Government Officials Expressing an Interest in Obtaining
Technical Assistance from ICMA/USAID

BULGARIA

1. Dr. Michail Michailov, Region Governor
6300 Haskovo; 7, Freedom square
ph. (00359 38) 2 46 55
fax. 2 49 62
2. Mr. Prodan Prodanov, Mayor (member of Association of
Democratic Cities in Bulgaria)
8000 Bourgas
ph. 35956/42677
fax. 45781

CZECH REPUBLIC

1. Dr. Libuse Kotilova, Mayor
379 18 Trebon I
Masarykovo namesti 20
ph. 0333/2585
2. Ing. arch, Jiri Smejkal, Mayor
729 30 Ostrava
Prokesovo nam. 8
ph. 21 59 20
fax. 22 31 69
3. Ing. Jiri Stanek, Mayor
746 26 Opava
Horni nam. 69
ph. 42653/21 29 48
fax. 21 20 40
4. Dr. Jan Sulc, Deputy Mayor
Vsetin
Svarov,
ph. 0657/3284
5. Mr. Jakub Skalnik, Deputy Mayor
572 01 Policka
ph. 0463/ 222 53, 24295
fax. 229 26

HUNGARY

1. Dr. Endreffy Ildiko, Deputy Mayor
4400 Nyiregyhaza
Kossuth ter 1.
ph. (36) 42 11 072, 42 11 155
2. Dr. Gal Andras, Councillor
4030 Debrecen
Vagohid u.9.
ph. (52) 68-244
3. Mr. Zoltan Bozso, Representative of the Local Government
4032 Debrecen
Lehel u. 20. IX. em. 69
ph. (52) 41 673

POLAND

1. Mrs. Elzbieta Hibner, Deputy Mayor
90-026 Lodz
ul. Piotrkowska 104
ph. 364460, 329040
fax. 321370
2. Mr. Wieslaw Seweryniak, Vice- Charman City Council
09-402 Plock
Gierzymskiego 21
3. Mr. Jakub Chmielewski, Charman of the local Government
Assembly
09-402 Plock
ul. 1 Maja 7b
ph. 293-41
fax.226-13
4. Mr. Jaroslaw Obremski, City Executive Board Member
50-141 Wroclaw
pl. Nowy Targ 1/8
ph. 44-89-74
fax.44-80-56
5. Mr. Zdzislaw Grzymajlo, Mayor
58-300 Walbrzych
Plac Magistracki 1
ph. 227-23, 238-91
fax.245-74
6. Dr. Stanislaw Wyganowski, Mayor
Warsaw

ROMANIA

1. Mr. Constantin Simirad, Mayor
6600 IASI
BD Stefan Cel Mare Nr.11
ph. 098/147412
fax. 112473

SLOVAKIA

1. Mr. Peter Kresanek, Mayor
81471 Bratislava
Primacialne nam. 1
ph. 427/ 33 47 37
fax. 33 54 05
2. Mr. Bronoslav Michalcak, Head of the Mayor's Office
81471 Bratislava
3. Mr. Peter Benuska, Chief architect Deputy Mayor
814 99 Bratislava
ph. 427/568 90
fax.427/335 405
4. Dr. Rudolf Bauer, Mayor
042 10 Kosice
tr. SNP 48/A
ph. 42/95/428 537
fax.42/95/437 175
5. Mr. Milos Dovicovic, Director of the Mayor's Office
950 06 Nitra
Stefanikova tr. 60
ph. 087/230 00
fax.087/41 73 29
6. Mr. Rastislav Jacak, Mayor
05201 Spiska Nova Ves
Stefanokovo namestie 5
ph. 0965/22272, 25758
fax. 26980
7. Dr. Jan Hurny, City Deputy Manager
05301 Spiska Nova Ves
Stefanokovo namestie 5
ph. 0965/26367
fax. 26980
8. Mr. Frantisek Murgas, Foundation in Support Local Democracy
91101 Trencin
gen. M.R. Stefanika 19

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SOUTH AFRICA

1. Mr. William Cobbett, National Co-ordinator; Housing and Development , Dept of Local and Regional Government and Housing, AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC)
 51 Plein Street - Johannesburg
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OTHER CONTACTS

1. Ms. Isabelle Brunois, Project Manager - Ecos Program
 Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
 75007 Paris
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2. Mr. Peter Nientied
 Institut for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS)
 The Netherlands
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3. Mr. Paul van Tongeren
 National Committee for Development and Education
 The Netherlands
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 ph. 20-24-84-87
4. Mr. Kees Verbass
 Association of Netherlands Municipalities
 The Netherlands
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5. Mr. Francis Ventura, Administrative and Financial Director
 United Towns Organization
 22, rue d' Alsace - 92300
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