Overall objectives: 1. To enhance the participation of civil society in legislative and policy reform on legal capacity to ensure domestic implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 2. To bring together like-minded civil society organisations in Balkan states to support people with disabilities to exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. Specific objective: To increase competencies of CSOs on both regional and national levels to strategically advocate and monitor reforms affecting persons with psycho-social and intellectual disabilities.

Project activities
1.1. Developing strategic plan with refined objectives and guiding principles (published in local languages and easy-to-read format) 1.2. Establishing network website as focal point for new developments, electronic publications, events, programmes 1.3. Three network-wide conferences on exchange of advocacy know-how and issue-specific developments 1.4. Five country-specific conferences to progress national reform agenda 1.5. Monitoring trends and developments in international law and policy 1.6. Publishing final project report in English and easy-to-read format; 2.1. Forming the pool of experts on the national levels to serve as a source for national authorities, judiciary, service providers 2.2. Publishing five country-specific reports and presenting them to relevant stakeholders 2.3. Conducting at least five training sessions for judges held in one country 2.4. Conducting at least one training session for service providers held in each country 2.5. Strategic litigation cases in at least two countries 2.6. Monitoring national commitments under international law (UN, CoE) 3.1. Launching an on-line campaign on the Right to act 3.2. Developing easy-to-read publication on the Right to act 3.3. Holding at least four consultation meetings with stakeholders in each country.

Results expected
1. Regional alliance established to strategically advocate for the human rights of persons with disabilities to exercise their legal capacity on an equal basis with others; 2. National CSOs involved in the action serve as resources for other national grassroots initiatives; 3. Awareness raised of stakeholders and wider society on the importance of and needed direction of the reform.

The results expected from the PERSON project include the development of a civil strategy for each partner country, underpinned by regional advocacy guidelines, leading to a move away from denial of legal capacity through guardianship, towards supported decision-making in each partner country. The regional guidelines and sharing of knowledge in PERSON will add value to the national reform efforts and ensure a sustainable process of change can be implemented. In terms of results at grassroots levels, PERSON will engage in consultations with citizens with disabilities, develop national pools of expertise, produce high quality legal research and analysis of domestic law, and monitor compliance with international human rights law. The involvement of international experts on human rights will ensure that governments recognise the value of domestic CSOs and open additional political opportunities for state-civil society dialogue.
The Centre for Disability Law and Policy is a research centre within the School of Law at the National University of Ireland, Galway. The formation of the Centre in 2008 coincides with one of the most intensive periods of disability law reform in Ireland as well as internationally. The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in 2007 should help accelerate this worldwide trend and give it further direction. The disability action plans of both the European Union and the Council of Europe help frame the policy choices facing Ireland and other European Member States. The main challenge ahead is implementation and the Centre produces research that contributes to that process.

The Centre has been at the centre of legal capacity reform in Ireland, and its director, Professor Gerard Quinn, is one of the leading academic thinkers on legal capacity and the UN CRPD. It is currently the coordinator of the €3.7m EU Marie Curie Initial Training Network DREAM (Disability Rights Expanding Accessible Markets). The primary aim of DREAM is to professionally develop and educate the next generation of disability policy researchers and entrepreneurs to assist the EU and its Member States in their efforts to implement the UN CRPD at EU and Member State levels.

The Centre also contributes to the co-ordination and management of the Academic Network of European Disability experts (funded by the European Commission to evaluate current disability law and policy across the member states) and co-operated with other partners to co-ordinate the EU Fundamental Rights Agency’s project on the Fundamental Rights of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Health Problems (commissioned by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in July 2010, and completed in 2012).

Staff: 12 full time, 2 part time, 12 doctoral researchers.

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Students and Staff of the Centre with the President of Ireland (middle front) at the Centre’s 4th International Disability Summer School 2012.

Mental Disability Rights Initiative (MDRI-S)
Inicijativa za prava osoba sa mentalnim invaliditetom MDRI-S

Mental Disability Rights Initiative (MDRI-S) is an advocacy organization dedicated to the human rights and full participation in society of children and adults with mental disabilities in Serbia. MDRI-S promotes citizen participation, awareness and oversight for the rights of persons with
intellectual and psycho-social disabilities, and participates in development of mental disability rights advocacy and self-advocacy movement in Serbia. The organization’s special focus is on those children and adults who are at risk of or who are already residing in social and mental health institutions, since they represent the most endangered and marginalized group. Since 2008, Mental Disability Rights Initiative MDRI-S has functioned as an independent organization focused on monitoring human rights in residential institutions, providing education on international human rights standards for persons with disabilities in Serbia, advocating the government for effective reform of laws that compromise the human rights of persons with disabilities, and decreasing stigma through promoting community inclusion. MDRI-S is a member of the national Network of organizations for children of Serbia (MODS) and a member of the Balkan Network for Social Inclusion.

Fields of work:
• MDRI-S’ work is foremost based on partner relationship and active participation of people with psycho-social and intellectual disabilities and their families. Their participation is the only guarantee for effective protection of their rights.
• MDRI-S monitors and reports about abuse and human rights violations over persons with disabilities. Special attention is paid to children with developmental disabilities and adults living in social care institutions. In 2011, MDRI-S signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy which covers monitoring of social care institutions for children with disabilities.
• In 2011, MDRI-S became part of the Serbian National Mechanism for Prevention of Torture (NPM) that monitors implementation of the Convention against Torture (CAT) and its Optional Protocol. Within this mechanism MDRI-S is in charge of systemic monitoring of the rights - as prescribed under the CAT - of persons with disabilities residing in the social care institutions.
• Monitoring of reform process implementation, practices and trends on domestic and international level is another important field of MDRI-S work. MDRI-S is taking part in legislative processes, including development of the Law on professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, General Education Act, and the Law on Social Protection. MDRI-S participated in drafting national standards for social services.
• MDRI-S conducts research and offers educations and trainings from specialized fields with the aim to shape opinions and standpoints of political, professional and general public through advocating disability rights. In central focus of the trainings are persons with intellectual and mental disabilities and their representatives. In publishing different reports, manuals and materials, MDRI-S provides due attention to using simple formats and easy-to-read versions. In providing direct support to people of marginalized groups and their families in situations when their rights are endangered, MDRI-S extensively cooperates with other organizations and institutions which offer legal aid and protect human rights, such as the Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Initiative for Inclusion VelikiMali, Ombudsman, Commissioner for Equality, etc.

Previous projects implemented with the EU support:
Balkan Network for Social Inclusion (BNSI), role of the partner, 2011-2012, regional, supported by the European Commission, IPA 2009 Civil Society Facility
Strengthening capacities of local self-governments and educational institutions for implementation of laws and practical policies of inclusive education in Serbia, role of the partner, 2011, national, supported by the Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Serbia
United in Action: Employment of persons with disabilities through public/private partnership, role of the applicant, 2011, national, supported by the Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Serbia

Photographs: public conference presenting the results of the research on judicial practice on legal capacity in Serbia (2011); publications

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Sumero was established in far 1968. After the interruption of work caused by the war in B&H in 2000 Sumero continues its work.

Since July 2010 SUMERO is a member of the European umbrella organization Inclusion Europe. SUMERO promotes human rights, advocacy and self advocacy of persons with intellectual difficulties, with the goal of their social inclusion through the development of quality support services in local community. SUMERO works on the improvement of legal regulations through lobbying, public advocacy campaigns, and coordination of its 30 member organisations.

Members of Union SUMERO are local organizations for support of people with intellectual disabilities in the Federation B&H and Brčko District. Partner organizations are local organizations from Republic of Srpska, with whom we implement several projects as well.

SUMERO is dedicated to protect the interests of people with intellectual disability and their families.

Mission: As an association of organizations of civil society, SUMERO promotes human rights, representation and self-representation of persons with intellectual difficulties, with the goal of their social inclusion through the development of quality support services in local community.

Vision: A society where persons with intellectual difficulties and their families participate equally in all aspects of life, have choices, possibilities and respect.

SUMERO has extensive experience in a number of projects which were realized in the entire B&H. As the largest support organization for people with intellectual disabilities in the B&H SUMERO is recognized as a partner of the government sector in the creation of rules, standards and legal solutions. Sumero has implemented major projects:

- Sumero in cooperation with organizations "People in Need" from the Czech Republic, Mental Disability Rights Initiative Kosovo and Mental Disability Rights Initiative, Serbia, implemented project "Balkans Regional Network for Social Inclusion". The goal of this project is to increase the competences of the civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia for more effective promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities through a strong and lasting regional partnership. (IPA 2009)
- Promotion of International Standards for Disability Assessment in the United States. The purpose of this project is to promote international standards for disability assessment (financed by Doctors for Disabled "Austria);
- Prevention of Institutionalization for Person with Intellectual Disability in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - as part of the program "Social inclusion of persons with intellectual difficulties through establishment of a mixed model of support services in local community", aimed at the harmonization of practices and the local legislation with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with a special emphasis on the rights from Article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community. Sumero has launched the first service Community Based Living, which is an alternative to traditional accommodation in a residential institution. (Project funded by the Open Society Mental Health Initiative-SOROS);
- Sumero introduced a model of Person-centred planning in B&H, which enables users share an active part in developing their plans, which focus on the person, and allows them maximum control of decisions about their lives (with support of the Helen Sanderson Association);
- Sumero is a partner of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the process of development of Community housing services. This project will resulted by opening of Services "Community based housing" in tree cantons in B&H. Project is supported Open Society Mental Initiative SOROS)

Staff SUMERO currently has 10 employees under a contract of employment and 10 persons employed part time jobs.
The Shine – Association for Social Affirmation of People with Psychosocial Disabilities is a civil society organization of people with psychosocial disabilities and their family members that was established in 1998 in Zagreb, Croatia. As from 2008 the Shine developed as an advocacy association and implemented various projects regarding affirmation of rights of people with psychosocial disabilities; advocated for reforms in Croatian legislation through lobbying and strategic litigation. The association is committed to advocacy for full implementation of the CRPD and has profound experience at national level regarding legal capacity. In 2011 and 2012 the association challenged electoral legislation that bans right to vote to people who are fully deprived of legal capacity and recently successfully lobbied for changes in Registry of Voters Act that will allow people deprived of legal capacity to be recognized as voters. The activities of the Shine are strongly supported by the Disability Ombudswoman, while representatives of Shine are regularly invited as guest lecturers at the Study Centre for Social Work, University of Zagreb. The Shine is member of the Mental Health Europe and World Network of (ex)-Users and Survivors in Psychiatry. The Shine is also represented in the Board of the Mental Health Europe with mandate until 2015.
ISDY (Institute of Sustainability and Development of Youth) is active in the fields of peace building, non-formal education and empowering of citizens to live a dignified life in Kosovo. It is active throughout Kosovo and works with all ethnic communities living there. ISDY SEE has positioned itself as an agent for social change through promotion of human rights in society and participation in policy-making.

Staff: twelve persons in the main office in, Pristina (Kosovo), one member of staff in Beograd (Serbia) and one member of staff in Tiran (Albania).

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The Initiative for Human Rights in Mental Health (RUSIHAK) is Turkey's first grassroots organisation by people with mental disabilities and their relatives. RUSIHAK challenges inhumane treatment by defining people with mental disabilities as full human beings, who are equal citizens in every way. RUSHIAK runs advocacy campaigns, organises free vocational and empowerment trainings for its stakeholders, and creates monitoring groups to inspect institutions to ensure they are compliant with legal and health regulations.

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