ICPE

Round Table on Trends and Developments in IT Supported Systems of Civil Status Registration

BACKGROUND PAPER

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1. Background

The International Centre for Promotion of Enterprises (hereinafter ICPE) organized together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, the Club of Former Slovenian Ambassadors and the African Forum in its capacity of an intergovernmental organization the international conference the 3rd Africa Day, which was almost entirely dedicated to the challenges posed by the 4th EU-Africa Summit in April. Along with its partners, ICPE included the topic of Good governance in civil status registration and its nexus to circular migration as one of its crucial panels.

The conference brought together high representatives of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, namely the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Education, Science and Sport and the Minister of Defense, high representatives of the European Commission - Development cooperation and External relations, resident and non-resident ambassadors of many African countries accredited to Slovenia, high representatives of the African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), academics, representatives of international organizations and EU Member States; the event was held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Slovenia. All the panelists who participated in the session on civil status governance agreed in conclusion that the matter of development cooperation between developed and developing countries is highly important. Furthermore, they agreed that the fast globalization process with its impact on mobility and migration needs well-developed systems of population civil status registration coupled by a good supporting system of vital statistics.

Slovenia as the host country of the conference participated with the presentation of its own system of centralized civil status register which is since 2005 onward completely digitalized; software solutions have been jointly developed in close cooperation with clients: civil servants aimed to provide the most efficient service to the citizens and other persons registered in the system. The experience of the almost 10 years of existence of the system demonstrated the highly beneficial results for the public administration, and foremost for the people who may now expect much higher results from the e-governance in this field. No more waiting in queues, having the possibility to receive certified information about the identity, including citizenship and address in one stop are among the advantages of this system, combined with the legally binding standard for the administration to provide *ex officio* information from the register for official purposes. The system is characterized by the continuous updating of the information which provides the latest status of natural persons with regard to their civil status.

Voter register, the integral basis for issuance of all identity documents, certification of citizenship, driver licenses, access to social rights, direct secure connection of the register with the consular sector around the globe, the connection to the database for the mandatory enrolment in primary school, the possibilities of connectivity with the database of health insurances, pension insurance, etc. are only some of the basic service deliveries of the administration for the citizens which might be further

developed. And it goes without saying that such a system provides an excellent basis for the gathering of all vital and demographic statistics to the extent to which the census of population with classic interviews is no longer needed. Statistical data is ready either for macroeconomic purpose or to develop proper proposals of policies in education, health, social and other domains.

The system which was presented during the conference drew the attention of the participants to the extent that it led to the conclusion to continue and prepare the possibility to introduce this system also to other potential actors who operate at global level.

Given the fact that many international organizations and other actors articulated during the last years the need for a common approach in finding the most efficient durable solutions to overcome global gaps with regard to the universal birth registration of children (the December 2013 UNICEF report on birth registration stipulates that despite of firm commitments under the Millennium Goals there are still roughly 230 million children whose births are not registered until the age of five), ICPE together with its partners GENIS and Interact4c (International Association Connecting Technologies For Citizens) would like to contribute to these global efforts.

2. Round table format

In this respect the decision was made to organize a round table with the aim of gathering the relevant actors who deal with the aspects of civil status registration globally, either as international organizations with political mandate, or actors dealing with the implementation of the respective strategies and action plans in practice at bilateral or multilateral level. Furthermore, the participation of representatives of the States will offer insight on one hand into the needs, and on another into the practical solutions of those who already passed the way to develop their own system.

Moreover, the roundtable shall provide an excellent opportunity for interactive discussion on modalities of civil status registration, in particular in the light of the fact that the concept has been developed as a part of the European continental legal system with the roots in the old Roman law. The concept that has been largely developed by the end of 18th century when the rulers at that time needed the figures about population size of and its breakdown according to gender and age for the purpose of governance. One of the purposes for introducing State-controlled registers of civil status was to have the tools for fiscal purposes, as well as to determine military conscripts. The next step of advanced reforms of public administration at that time was the introduction of population registers and land registers that included the ownership of the land and immovable property.

The need for the differentiation between the registration of population and the registration of civil status makes sense when searching for the software solutions of the countries which look for modern concepts but have different legal traditions.

The round table will therefore try to demonstrate practical solutions, including highest standards of data privacy and backing capacity in training which might be used as one of the models during the phase relevant for the introduction of new generations of identity documents.

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