



Round table on the Trends and Development in IT Supported Systems of Civil Status Registration, 18 September 2014

SUMMARY REPORT

On November 20th, the UN and its members will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of a Child. The convention is a unique instrument which enacts the rights of a child to identity and the obligation of the State to immediately register the birth of each child, his or her name as well as to acquire his or her nationality. Despite of the 25 year long period, there are, according to UNICEF, still roughly 230 million of children, who are not registered at birth.

This Round table had, inter alia, also the aim, to contribute to the efforts of the international community to highlight the needs in this field, and to present the model of one of the best practices, which has been developed by Slovenia.

For this purpose, the organizers gathered representatives of the Governments, international organizations, private sector and civil society in order to address the challenges, as well as the solutions.

The Round table confirmed the following facts:

- One of the impacts of globalization on our lives is also information technology, which has, during the last decade, tackled the entire Globe.
- The international mobility of people, goods and services is calling for more security in crossing international frontiers, as well as regarding transnational transactions.
- Developments of democracy call for more transparency and universality of the political rights of the electorate and thus request a reliable system to manage the identity of the citizens.
- The commitments of the international community to meet the Millennium Goals to 2015, covering mainly children and women, cannot be met in the countries where the needs call for a swift assistance to set up at least the basic registration of the birth of each child.
- Comprehensive modern systems of centralized management of civil status, supported by the best IT solutions, are proved to be the most efficient way to access the rights of the citizens.

- If systems of civil status are properly developed, under the assumption that there is an appropriate institutional and legislative framework, they are one of the pivotal guarantees to support democratic governance.
- The civil status of a natural person falls under the domain of civil law. Its content depends on the legal system of each State and thus still falls under the Sovereignty of the State.
- In some States, the content of civil status of a natural person is modest and is limited to the elements related to the registration of vital facts: birth, marriage and death; the institutional framework is based on tradition, originating from 19th century.
- In some States, this domain has been developed in accordance with strong institutional and legislative framework, which allows the application of the most modern technologies.
- Such systems aim to serve the best interest of the citizens, allowing them the most efficient access to their rights: social, economic and political.
- The State benefits from a system, which provides its service to the citizens in the most effective way; furthermore, the State must secure the highest standards of data protection by an appropriate institutional framework of control over the administrators of data.
- The State also benefits from reliable statistical data, which contribute to the development of accountable public policies, e.g. social, economic, health, education, fiscal, defense, security policies.

The aims of the **Round table on the Trends and Development in IT Supported Systems of Civil Status Registration** were strongly supported by High representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia. The international participants, along with leading Slovenian experts agreed that global trends of informatization of the civil status registration, following the technological progress in management of identity: biometrics, provide secure identity – secure for the individual as well as the State. Practical solutions, in accessing social rights awarded by the UN, have been presented by the head of the team from the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia. While the historical and legal dimension were introduced by Interact4c.

Conclusions and the way forward

1. The participants agreed that a modern centralized system of management of civil status registration is *conditio sine qua non* for the governance of identity of a natural person; moreover, it is the basis for access to social, economic and political rights of the citizens.
2. The experience of the countries, which aimed to have facilitated or visa free regime in order to enter the EU for their citizens, confirms the fact that a well developed system of civil status registration is one of pivotal preconditions to achieve this goal.
3. Travel documents used in international trans - border traffic contain sufficient biometric safeguards, while the source information used to prove the identity of the holder of the document, usually remains more or less untouched.

4. There is little awareness that birth and marriage certificates, in many States prove the identity if containing the necessary legalization authentication.
5. Furthermore, the participants agreed, that appropriate training of civil servants contributes to the quality of the national civil status registration system.
6. High ethical standards and the will of the citizens in regard the gathering of personal data on civil status must be in the center of the design and architecture of an IT supported system of management of civil status registration.
7. The development of a “One stop shop”, like in the case of Georgia, strengthens the trust of citizens in the delivery of services rendered by the State, among which civil status plays an important role.
8. Worldwide, there exists an increased need of introduction of modern concepts of civil status registration, namely in developing countries where the birth rate registration is still low; the transfer of practice of developed countries to developing is also a possible way to improve the situation.
9. Events like this Round table contribute to the general raising of awareness on existing needs in other parts of the world and highlights also the dimension of development assistance, namely in the field of the rights of a child, where birth registration is one of the fundamental ones.
10. A well - developed system of civil status registration is the first step towards reliable vital statistics, the tool which enables effective strategies in health, education, interventions in the social field, the elimination of gender discrimination, etc.
11. The participants agreed that much more should and could be done in order to improve the general situation in parts, which need to build new capacities. The conclusions of the Round table should serve as the basis for further steps and actions in this field.