Main discussion points:

Below is the transcript of the recording

- Ways to overcome the mistrust in society

*Natalia Mirimanova*

Everything is grounded in trust. The societies are held together by trust more then by anything else. However, the trust has its signifiers. One of the issues is underrepresentation of some minorities, and Crimean Tatars in our case, in the police and in the political structures. It is a signifier of the discrimination, it is a very complex matter, it is not a one way street either, it is not only the state discriminating Crimean Tatars, but it is also collective culture, lack of possibility to create ethnic parties. It is very complex thing. Now schools, education. Why do we try to explore this prospect for trilingual education? It is not to oblige everyone to learn Crimean Tatar, but rather to create the environment and possibilities for people to become trilingual. Because for the preservation of the culture of Crimean Tatar and of the language it is not sufficient for Crimean Tatars only to speak Crimean Tatar. The language needs to go outside. This can also become a signifier of great trust. If the Russian speaks Crimean Tatar and Crimean Tatar speaks Russian and they all speak Ukrainian and it becomes a norm, then it is a quite positive message to the entire society. Regarding that, we have just sent a team of one Russian, one Ukrainian and on Crimean Tatar to Latvia to study their experience of bilingualism. Later in the summer they will go to Finland to study bilingualism there – Finnish, Swedish, Saami etc. So we are trying to draw examples from various parts of the world to see which could be relevant and inspiring for Crimean society. So we are trying not only to talk about building trust but also to create signifiers of greater trust if you wish. I wish it could be done at any level of the society.

- Field work

*Eveline Schulz*

We[EEAS] have an information points opened in Sevastopol and Simferopol. So there are colleagues on the ground. What is important is to show the EU presence on the ground. At least people can come and if they are interested to inform about EU. Also I know that there is a programme dedicated to cooperation of the info points specifically with academics and Universities and students, so that we build up on the investment into the young generations to inform them about EU-Ukraine. It is always the first information to come and then we can build projects.

- Trilingual education

*Natalia Mirimanova*

First of all there are 3 official languages in Crimea, but you would never notice. You have the Constitution of Crimea written in 3 languages. Formally, technically, you can come to the public official and require that he or she communicates with you in Crimean Tatar. But it never happens. First of all no one outside Crimean Tatar community speaks the Crimean Tatar. Secondly, not all of Crimean Tatars speak Crimean Tatar, which is also a major concern for the Crimean Tatar community. That is a question of existing gap between the formal trilingualism and what is
happening on the ground. I heard that Dzharti has recently talked about the prospects of trilingual education. That was not our proposal at all, because we still want first to conduct a research and then come up with a solid proposal. It is a difficult thing. It requires first of all the political will, definitely. Secondly, it requires qualified teachers, someone who would be able to teach, let say, physics in Crimean Tatar and in Russian. This is the concept of trilingual education: it is not only teaching languages, but teaching subject in languages, and this is how the language leaves. So it requires funds to train this kind of teachers. In present, the Crimean Engineering and Teacher Training University prepare 25 Crimean Tatars teachers every year, but these are just language teachers. So it is not sufficient. These undertakings will definitely require some investments. But first, we need to prove, and that is what we are currently doing, that it worth it as a conflict prevention measure in the first place. We are in the middle of our research, so we will come with a solid result sometime at the end of October, when we will gather enough of the evidence. We will come up with scenarios. It is not an easy thing, but we still hope to try to get it going.

Eveline Schulz:

On the EU side, I am not sure if we have on-going programmes specifically dedicated to language as such, but as we have general EU motto ‘unity in diversity’, promoting multiculturalism I do not see why EU would not support any projects related to trilingual education. [...] The language issue is raised in the high level meetings with Crimean authorities. We encourage the Crimean Tatars representatives to build up on that.

Natalia Mirimanova:

It is very difficult to sell this idea of trilingual education to the Russian majority in Crimea. They say, well, everyone speaks Russian, we have two lingua franca in Crimea, so why do we need to do that? And this is the most difficult thing because their concern is, we have also done a research on linguistic threats, so their concern is that they perceive it like the Crimean Tatar language will be introduced in the education at the expense of the Russian language, which will mean the deterioration of the standards of the Russian language education. So as long as we can come up with some non-zero sum game to turn it into the mutually beneficial thing, then we will be able to come with a solid policy proposal [...] Crimean Tatars are trilingual already. The idea is to make everybody participate in this trilingual system.

Miquel Cabal Guarro, researcher of the University of Barcelona on Crimean Tatar sociolinguistic matters:

It is very interesting to speak about trilingual educational modal; it is interesting because as you have said the Crimean Tatar world is already trilingual. Crimean Tatar students all know Crimean Tatar, Russian and Ukrainian language. But the fact is that only language subject is in Crimean Tatar, all the other subjects are led in Russian. So the so called Crimean Tatar National School is in Russian in fact, but they also learn Crimean Tatar. So I would like to say that the language as an element of self-identification of the community is not lost by Crimean Tatars. They tempt to say that they speak Crimean Tatar at home or with friends, although it is not true. I think we should foster this sensitive self-identificational language in order to put language back to the street. As for the younger generations they almost never speak Crimean Tatar only to their grandparents. They are losing their language. And it is not far away from becoming to an endangered language.
I am from Catalonia. As you know we have the Catalonian educational system. We have started it 30 years ago and it has been working since. Even if not everybody speaks Catalan, everybody understands it.

*Natalia Mirimanova: 1:20:00*

We propose a gradual approach. It is quite a new idea and it seems to be quite challenging for the society itself. So, the idea that we are trying to play with is to start with kindergartens. [...] Two teachers, one speaking Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian and another one Crimean Tatar and Russian. So they communicate with children in various languages, so in total we have trilingual system. And then at schools, for example, physics is being taught in Crimean Tatar and Russian and biology in Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian.

There are different models around the world. We are exploring all of them, including the trilingual models all over the world and in Europe. Because the bilingualism is quite straight forward. Trilingualism is more challenging in terms how to organise the education process. And the main concern that parents have for instance, yes it is nice to know several languages, but does it mean doubling the time kids spend at school? Or doubling the load of thing to learn? Regarding to that there is an interesting cutting edge research on bilingualism and trilingualism. Kids that are bilingual, let say they have two parents who speak two different languages, when they are shown a picture, they describe it differently in two different languages. There is also another research that shows that people who are bilingual they are more tolerant in general, because it is normal to them to live in two parallel systems of reality if you wish, because language is reality, language defines everything.

We are trying to find psychological, sociological, political backing for the trilingual system, because, as I have said, it is challenging. So we need to be very well grounded in theory before we start something like that. But it will be gradual and definitely not mandatory. These are two important things at the first step.

[...]

Question of professional who will be implementing all this is absolutely key. It came up from our research that students who will be teachers are much more enthusiastic about being trilingual or bilingual teachers than the actual teachers of middle age. Which gives us a bit of hope. Plus, when we say that there will be some extra payment for trilingual or bilingual teachers, they become really much more enthusiastic, which is normal. Everywhere the teachers teaching in various languages get plus around 20%. So there are various modes to encourage the trilingual education, but of course there needs to be an initial investment and first of all into the training of professional teachers who would be able to do that, teach physics in two or three languages. What Crimean Tatars complain about is that they lack vocabulary for teaching math, physics, biology. For very long time this language was not developing. So, the vocabulary is not there. So there are many challenges.

We are at the beginning; we are just starting this exploration.

- **Cleavages within the community**

*Natalia Mirimanova:*
Crimean Tatars group is not homogenous. This is very important to understand. There are some common goals that unite them. At the time of crisis, at the times of potential threat, they are all together. But in other case they are just like any other group. It has political fractions: more radical, more moderate, more pro-Russian etc. There is a whole spectrum. Milli Mejlis is a champion here, because Mejlis so far is the most solid core of the Crimean Tatars society. It is political nucleus. But, yes, there is diversity, especially regarding the land matters. It is the issue that we are exploring now. Whether the self-squatting phenomenon increases political competition within ethnic groups. It seems to be the case within the Crimean Tatars group. In spite of non-violent approach, there are groups that are ready to take action. Fortunately, it has never happened. But there are groups that are taking a more radical stand on the land issues than Mejlis for instance. Now Mejlis seems to cooperate with the new government on the resolving the land issues.... In the recent paper that I wrote on the UN ... I point to that, this is a very dangerous moment that may start the tensions within the Crimean Tatar community. This line between the cooperation and cooptation is very fine. So, yes there is diversity. But I think it is healthy. You need diversity.

- **Comparison of the Crimean Tatar issue to the European Muslims’ one**

  *Natalia Mirimanova:*

  I would say that the Muslim factor or Islam factor within the Crimean Tatar society is much more recent phenomena compared to the Muslims immigrating to Europe. Because during the Soviet times, I am not sure that they were able to practice Islam. My observation is that the Crimean Tatars as a community are quite secular. The religion is important, but all this fights about the mosque, where to build it, they ascend not to religious problems but to other political problems. People recall the old times before the deportation, when Crimean Tatars were the majority in the Crimea and when Russians living there spoke the Crimean Tatar. Of course people tempt to idealise, but event then there were no religious clashes.

  Nevertheless, Islamic card is being actively played for political reasons by extreme Russian groups in Crimea. They are using the existing stereotype of the Islamic threat to their demographic trends. Russian clearly lose to Crimean Tatars in terms of birth rate and it is sort of exaggerated fear of Russians being squeezed out from Crimea. But I see it as a political manipulation rather than a really existing Islamic threat. There is registered in Crimea, but is does not have a permanent service. It has services at the times of the elections, at the tomes of political crises etc. But I do not see it as a problem. It is just being politically used.

  *Leonidas Donskis MEP:*

  I think it can be quite ambivalent to put many different Islamic approaches to the same category, because we know that there are very tolerant Muslim countries like Azerbaijan or Bosnia from the former Yugoslavia. They are very tolerant. They have a very tolerant version of Islam. The same can be said about the Crimean Tatars. They are quite secularised, quite laid back, quite accustomed to living in multicultural sphere. So that is why, it makes no sense to put them to the same category. As we know there are very different and even opposed versions of Islam. It is a political card.

  *Marino Busdachin:*
If I can just add something, I disagree with Mr. Emmerson [presentation]. An identity of a people is not only question of religion. It is a question of culture, of cuisine, of music, of history, of memory. I disagree totally. I think that the question regarding the people who has been deported and is now back to their home and culture and living memory, disserves respect. The integration of newcomers to Europe of a different religion is a completely different question I think. By the way, Crimean Tatars, they are referring even to a cultural identity that is swimming in the waste lake of the so-called Turkish people who have some common elements, some common identities, even a kind of Turkish approach to Islam that is very different to the newcomers of Islamic religion to Europe. The question is, in my opinion, completely different. And it will be good to keep the way closed to the restoration of the complex of that right. It doesn’t matter if one is coming before another, the problem is day by day to reach a target to get some rights for the Crimean Tatar people, the question of religion was not and will not be I think the major one. And the question of Islam is very difficult, to see an Islamist version in the very large Turkish community. Obviously there are marginal elements and so on but this is not yet, I think, a political problem.

- **Raising awareness of Crimean Tatars issue**

*Natalia Mirimanova:*

One of the top civil servants of Crimean government participates on a regular basis in our dialogues and he’s part of the program. He participates in his private capacity of course but it is extremely important people from the official public structures are with us. Plus we have two advisors to Dzarthty who participate in our dialogue, and people from Mejlis and others. So by itself, this communication is a very important thing. I mean for example, he, this public servant, initiated this idea of going to Finland and studying the autonomy of the Åland islands and how it affects, as I call it, the subjective discrimination of Fins there who are in the minority and to study the experience of Saami as an indigenous peoples and how that life feeds from Swedes who live there in Lapland and how do they feel themselves. So things are moving ahead, it is not easy. Plus now we have come out of the closet so to speak because for the first year we were not publicising our dialogues at all because it is so sensitive and we have people who were risking, frankly speaking, by participating in these dialogs. But now that everyone has survived and we have gathered momentum we had a meeting with Dzarty and this was a meeting where people were directly able to communicate to him their concerns, their proposals. And he seemed to be very open and he said as long as you come up with a good published proposal we will consider that. We had a meeting with Mijlis, although we meet with people form Mijlis and the government on a regular basis, on an individual basis. But here we will have a meeting at the end of July with the Russian political community, the Ukranian community in Crimea. So what we do is reach out to everyone and this our way of educating people about how things can be done differently in a way. Plus we don’t criticise but quite the opposite, we come up with proposals, which is an important thing. We try not to alienate anyone but rather to improve.

- **The issue of repatriation**

*Natalia Mirimanova:*

It is an interesting case. Crimean Tatars were welcomed to return and then there were no money to build anything for them. Nobody would object Crimean Tatars returning to their lands, but there
were never enough funds to create the conditions for them. Plus there is an issue of lands. Crimean Tatars consider their historical lands the most expensive lands in Crimea that have already been many times sold, resold etc. The lands have an immense commercial value. This is a big problem. If it would be somewhere in a desert nobody would object. But that is a point: it is along the sea coast. That is why it is so difficult. Plus as you understand the land corruption plays a huge role.

There were projects when the Crimean Tatars were offered lands somewhere in “inlands” so to say. Some of the Crimean Tatars have moved there but then have found themselves without any infrastructure: no electricity, no gas no water. So, it has not been addressed in a proper way: you are welcome, but then you are on your own.

- **Support of the central government**

*Natalia Mirimanova:*

First of all, the move that I consider to be not smart is abolishment of the State Committee on Nationalities and Religions. It does not exist anymore in Ukraine. It was basically the only committee that dealt with Crimean Tatars along with the department on deported people. They could not do much because of endless financial problems and the lack of budget, but at least there was a body dealing with the issue. Now their functions were distributed among the ministries, the staff was fired with all the institutional memory. And that is it, speaking about the support of the central government.

Now, it was also done in the framework of the optimisation of the system of government, which EU requires.

We had a presentation in Kiev, and we will have one more, so we are trying to engage as much people from Kiev as we can. There some participating on the permanent basis in our dialog including from what is called the National Centre for Strategic Studies, which is the major think tank. So we are engaging them and we try to convey our messages through them. But in general, Kiev is very separate from Crimea. The previous president Yuschenko was always making promises never fulfilling them, so he has created the huge frustration among the Crimean Tatars. Then Crimean Tatars were hoping that Yulia Timoshenko will help them solving their problems, but she was not in power. So relationship with Kiev is always very problematic for Crimea, but we are trying to bring these two parts together.