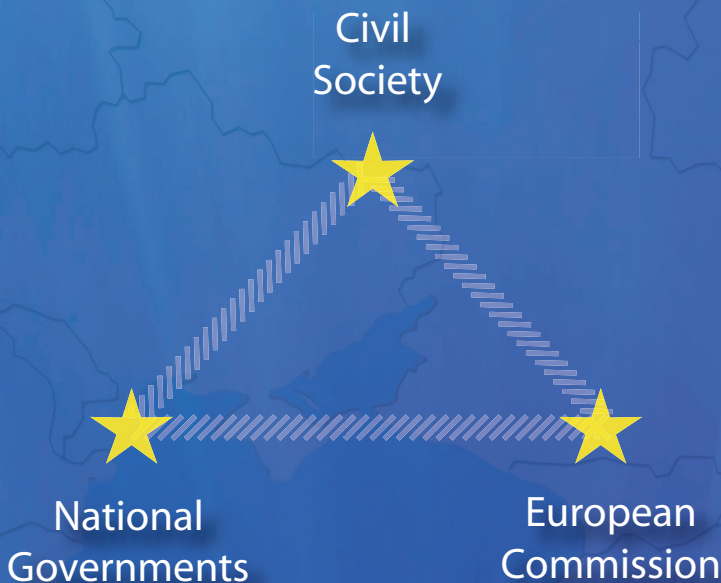


Towards a Sustainable Europe-wide Civil Society



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Preface

This is an important publication for the strategy of the European Union towards civil society development in the Western Balkans, Turkey, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The core of the publication is made up of twelve national reports from a wide spectrum of civil society organisations (CSOs). For the first time, politicians and officials dealing with enlargement and neighbourhood policy can read clear signals from civil society directly across the region, with all their striking common features, but against the background of the huge differences from one country to the next. The Ljubljana Declaration distils from the national reports a number of key demands. An important message of this document is that the process of the EU-oriented reform in the Western Balkans and the wider European neighbourhood can not depend on the civil society alone. Civil society has through a strategic role to play, which could tip the balance towards success or failure.

What was ECAS' role in the process?

At the conference on 2 April 2008, where the declaration was launched, the Commission described the role of ECAS as that of a “Sherpa”. Everest would not have been conquered without sherpas. Sherpas of a different kind helped salvage the European Union’s Constitutional Treaty from the wreckage, although with hindsight we might criticise their over-secretive approach. Sherpas have a supporting role and cannot make things happen. The publication came about because NGOs in the region are demanding to be listened to – a positive sign for their future development – and saw value in speaking with one voice. It is no surprise to us therefore that this common exercise calling for holistic policies towards civil society has been followed up by common action testing the recent EU visa

facilitation agreements by an investigation and successful hotline launched on the same day across the Western Balkans. Civil society in the European neighbourhood is on the march.

The process described here grew out of the information, training and scholarship programme (ITS) run by ECAS and supported both by MOTT foundation. It has a multiplier effect and has been taken up in several programmes run by Commission delegations in new member states and neighbouring countries. The aim of the programme is to create in each country a viable group of EU specialists among CSOs. This is done in partnership with a host organisation which provides information tools, selecting a cross-section of NGOs for an intensive training course in lobbying, fundraising, how the EU works and its relations with CSOs. This is followed by study visits and scholars coming to Brussels to develop their own contacts and projects, usually for one month. The programme has now covered in new member states, Western Balkans and Eastern Europe countries¹. In Croatia - it has been run twice and has achieved its greatest impact. In the run-up to the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 27 Member States, we rightly or wrongly at ECAS regarded this as a useful, technical capacity building exercise. Dates of accession were known, Commission delegations were mostly clear about their strategy and national administrations were putting considerable resources into preparation. The enlargement process was helpful for civil society development, because there was at least more cross-party political support on joining the EU than on most issues, and endorsed by large majorities in referenda.

On balance, early support by foundations, civil society development programmes, more specialised programmes for different NGO sectors and finally access to pre-accession funds and then structural

¹ For more details see www.ecas-citizens.eu

funds have helped to build up civil society. Success has though been achieved not without creating avoidable problems: exit strategies were often too rapid with foundations moving further east or to other parts of the world and many NGOs finding it paradoxically much harder to deal with the EU after rather than before accession. By that time, however, many national governments had increased their own contributions to civil society development.

By comparison, however, the ITS programme now operates in a much more complex and difficult environment of enlargement fatigue with no clear dates for accession, less political consensus, significant obstacles to reform and very wide differences between countries. With the exception of Croatia, what was originally a practical programme required a new advocacy dimension. In civil society, there was not much demand for national reports and common declarations in the run-up to the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, but now they fill a vacuum. They at least give us the reasonably clear objectives and parameters, which are not being provided by European and national policy makers.

How did this process come about?

The start of the process was a conference in Brussels in October 2007 which coincided with the adoption of the EU regulations for pre-accession and neighbourhood policies within the framework of the 2007-2013 financial perspectives. ECAS produced technical and legal analyses of the partnership clauses in the texts². To our surprise, 90 people from 22 countries crowded together in a room for 50 maximum to start what had clearly started to look like more than a purely technical process. We duly adapted the questionnaires to focus them on a less technical and broader agenda than just EU neigh-

² For more details see [ECAS working paper](#)

bourhood and IPA programmes, and then waited. A few weeks before the conference in Ljubljana on 2 April 2008, at which we were supposed to produce the “declaration” advertised on the programme we had no national reports on which to draft such a text. The October meeting only gave us a shopping list rather than a real contribution to policy-making. Then the national reports started to come in and it was clear that a process was initiated which others were now driving. Indeed at the preparatory meeting – again far more people came than expected – the evening before the 2 April 2008 conference in Slovenia, attempts at re-drafting were thrown out and a small group worked until 2.00 a.m. on a new version.

Further amendments were still being made on the margins of the opening session the next day. The Council Presidency representatives on the outside of the process were probably considering by now whether they had taken the right decision to fund the event. Thanks, however, to the efficiency of our local partners CNVOS and the superb facilities of the Slovenian Presidency at the Brdo conference centre, 20 hours of amending was printed out and distributed in 20 minutes to 150 participants.

As a sherpa in the process, ECAS opened the last session by declaring that it was up to the participants to decide whether or not to approve the Ljubljana declaration as a consensus document. If they did so, it should not be considered as a declaration on which every word had been agreed by all organisations, but as a “living document” and part of a process. The general will among participants was to achieve consensus and they did so with a further series of amendments which did nothing as often happens on such occasions, to water down the text with meaningless compromise. On the contrary, there were corrections, improvements in analysis and new ideas. Until the last minute, this was a cliff hanger. That we succeeded was very much due to my colleague, Elena Tegovska and our partners in

the region. The ITS programme had helped us build not only strong organisational partnerships, but also the personal contacts and mutual trust necessary to work together effectively.

What are the main features of the Ljubljana declaration?

The declaration should be read together with the national reports from which it attempts to distil the key messages. It should also be related to the European Commission's welcome initiative to launch a civil society initiative for the Western Balkans, but which ECAS believes could be extended to other countries in the European Eastern neighbourhood. A key passage from the Ljubljana declaration reads as follows:

“In theory, a win-win situation could be created. Civil society stands to gain from the support of the EU for the process of reforms and the adoption of European standards. For the EU, civil society is a watchdog active precisely in the areas where reforms are most sensitive, an independent source of information and advice. National politicians also recognise, but by no means unanimously, that they need the critical support of an independent civil society to achieve the reforms, which will bring them closer to the Union. As one national report states, “the building up of the sustainable “triangle” – Civil society – the EU and national governments is expected to be completed in due time.”

The jury is still out on whether such a win-win situation will work in practice. The national reports warn about many critical issues and that the “sustainable triangle” is not something that will occur automatically. There are a number of conditions attached to success, of which the following appear to be the most important:

- Listen to civil society

As the declaration states, “After a decade or more of experimentation and projects which has lead to a significant development of the NGO community, the next stage must be to give this community a greater say in the shaping of the policies for enlargement and the EU neighbourhood. This means that the engagement with civil society has to occur at a much earlier stage before national strategies are formulated.” Too much is donor driven, rather than starting from the needs of civil society.

- Develop a long-term strategy for a sustainable civil society

“Without longer-term perspectives, there can be no guarantee that a strong European civil society will emerge in the Western Balkans and neighbouring countries similar to that in new member states. On the contrary, NGOs may be diverted from long-term sustainability and expected to carry out an advocacy and monitoring role in the national reform process without having first acquired the necessary capacity and public support. There is also a danger that “certain areas remain constantly in focus whereas others remain without any support.” As one report puts it, “Donors should choose the strategic support of civil society and avoid financing of short-term projects.””

- Put the partnership principle into practice

The declaration recommends: “The Commission should remind the governments of their legal obligations and ask them to come forward with consultation plans for implementation of the partnership principle at all stages of the design, programming and evaluation of the national action plan. EC delegations should make civil society participation mandatory in policy shaping and programming process” The reports all point to real difficulties in bridging the gap between the EU texts on partnership and what actually happens. NGOs are rarely consulted on a process which

is very remote for the vast majority except “insiders” in the capital.

- Strengthen the capacity of small organisations

There is emphasis in the reports on the need for outreach through information tools, in the language of users and re-granting mechanisms.

“...Smaller local associations are outside the circle of EU information, let alone consultation, and are not connected to the Internet. Yet they represent 90% of any viable civil society. EU institutions and national governments should improve this situation by engaging different stakeholders such as community foundations, civil society development organisations and NGO support structures. They bring together a wide spectrum of partners, which could be linked to EU programmes”

The declaration is not necessarily new to practitioners. The real value is that on the basis of the national reports it introduces the idea of a strategic and holistic approach to the development of civil society. Very often, issues of funding or the legal and fiscal environment for NGO development tend to be considered in isolation, whilst the Institutional and governance aspects of creating a supportive environment for civil society growth tend to be underestimated. There is no single European model to create an enabling environment. This pool of recommendations and national reports is therefore all the more important as a basis for bench making and assessing progress. In this respect, DECIM (the Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information mechanism) bringing together the European Commission, the World Bank and foundations could be a useful instrument to strengthen the triangle and address both the European and the national contributions to civil society development.

This publication also leaves open many questions. For example, the national reports show that the value of coalition building is appreciated, and that is important for NGOs to speak with one voice if they are to have a chance of influencing the neighbourhood and accession policies. However, there is often a difficulty of combining inclusiveness with efficiency. Nor is it entirely clear how NGOs are expected to become involved as watchdogs in the progress of reforms and at the same time strengthen their roots in society.

The Ljubljana declaration was formally presented by a delegation of our partners to the Commission during the civil society conference - "Civil Society Development in Southeast Europe: Building Europe Together" which took place on 17-18 April 2008. Oli Rehn, the Commissioner responsible for enlargement described it as important, and it was a point of reference during debates which echoed, not surprisingly, many of its themes. The next stage is for our partners to follow up this first step by examining their own countries, with their national authorities, what are their strong points and what can be improved and adapted on the basis of other countries' experience. The next stage – the conference in Zadar, Croatia on 29 and 30 September 2008 will be an opportunity to examine what progress has been made.

Conference: Giving a stronger voice to civil society
in the European neighbourhood

Development of civil dialogue and partnership relations between
civil society, national governments and EU institutions

International Conference

Brdo, Slovenia

2 April 2008

Ljubljana declaration

Policy recommendations to EU Institutions and national governments

Bearing in mind that this Declaration is a common vision of civil society organisations participating at this Conference, irrespective of the State's relations with the EU and recognising the diversity of each country's civil society;

Emphasizing that the creation of a sustainable triangle – civil society, the EU and national governments – is expected to be completed in due time;

Civil society organisations from the countries of the Western Balkans, Turkey, the Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy region and the Russian Federation have gathered at Brdo, Slovenia, to call upon the EU Institutions and national governments to:

Listen to civil society: All that is required from EU institutions and national governments is to listen and understand but also to include civil society in the different policies and programmes. After

more than a decade of experimentation and projects which has led to a significant development of NGOs, this community must now become an actor with a greater say in the policy making process. It is essential to establish more structured and transparent consultation mechanisms at EU level, but also at national level.

Develop a long-term strategy for a sustainable civil society: EU Institutions and national governments should provide strategic support to civil society thus avoiding financing and implementing mainly short-term projects. Lessons can be learned from the successful experience of the new EU member states where early capacity building created a platform for civil society organisations enabling them to access EU and national resources more extensively. _

Put the partnership principle into practice thus overcoming problems the EU is facing with regards to the implementation of its legal framework. In order for the partnership principle to work, civil society organisations should be treated as actors and not only as beneficiaries. Moreover, the European Commission should remind governments of their legal obligations and ask them to come forward with consultation plans for implementation of the partnership principle at all stages, programming and evaluation of the national action plans.

Strengthen the capacity of small organisations: EU strategies and action plans lead to concentration on larger NGOs whereas small NGOs and those in remote and peripheral areas are receiving little information and no possibilities for involvement. EU institutions and national governments should improve this situation by engaging different stakeholders such as community foundations, civil society development organisations and NGO support structures. They bring together a wide spectrum of partners, which could be linked to EU programmes. There are models, including those within the

new member states for re-granting instruments for small NGOs and support for micro-projects.

Focus on creating a supportive environment for CSOs sustainability: The EU should create its own policies that would influence national governments to develop an enabling legal, fiscal and institutional framework. EU institutions and national governments should build mechanisms for cross-sectoral cooperation, public participation and improved access to documents; they should support the civil society organisations to build coalitions and networking at the EU level and ensure strong and adapted capacity building. In this respect, the Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information mechanism (DECIM) and foundations are the best response to many concerns.

Civil society organisations are willing to work with EU Institutions and national governments in order to establish structured and transparent mechanisms for cooperation, adapted to each country's specificities.

The Annex attached to this Declaration specifies and further develops the above-mentioned recommendations on how to act more effectively in order to create a supportive environment for civil society organisations. The suggestions are made on the basis of analysis of national reports (see Annex) that address legal, fiscal, social and institutional environments as well as the importance of the European networking, exchange and scholarship programmes. At the end, a list of civil society organisations that support the Ljubljana Declaration is provided.

Ljubljana, 02 April 2008

Annex to the Ljubljana Declaration

- 1. Listen to civil society*
- 2. Develop a long-term strategy for a sustainable civil society*
- 3. Focus on creating a supportive environment for CSOs sustainability*
- 4. Improve access to documents and fill in the information gaps*
- 5. Put the partnership principle into practice*
- 6. Help in building coalitions among CSOs*
- 7. Train CSOs on how to access EU funds*
- 8. Strengthen the capacity of small organisations*
- 9. Encourage donor coordination*
- 10. Facilitate European networking*

The Declaration represents a consensus view from civil society representatives across 12 countries³, which participated in the conference held on 2 April 2008 in Brdo, Slovenia. This Conference is part of the ITS⁴ Advocacy campaign⁵ to launch a debate at EU and national level about how to create sustainable partnership relations between civil society actors, EU and national authorities. Three international conferences are envisaged in the framework of this campaign: the Brussels conference, which was held in October 2007⁶, the Ljubljana conference and the concluding conference, which will be held in Zadar on 25-26 September 2008.

³ Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine

⁴ ECAS NGO capacity building programme – Information, Training and Scholarship (ITS) – has been running since 2002 aiming to create a viable capacity among the civil society organisations from New members states, Western Balkans and Eastern Europe to deal with the EU.

³ For more information see [ITS Advocacy campaign](#)

⁴ For more information see ECAS website [Brussels conference](#)

⁵ To read all the national reports please go to [ECAS's website](#)

The results of the Brussels conference were used to develop a questionnaire for CSOs from the region. The questionnaire was sent to ECAS partner organisations in the Western Balkan, Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy region, Turkey and the Russian Federation, who translated it into the local language and disseminated it widely. Each partner collected and analysed the replies in order to make a national report⁷. The questionnaire involved more than 100 NGO representatives. The reports served as a basis for drafting this Declaration.

The participants are grateful to the Slovenian Presidency of the EU for making this event possible and urge that this Declaration should be followed up at government level.

There is support from all the EU Institutions to include civil society organisations in helping their governments to undertake the necessary reforms that will bring them closer to the Union and eventually make them EU members. In its recent communication on the European neighbourhood policy, the Commission states that “civil society organisations have a valuable role to play in identifying priorities for action and in promoting and monitoring the implementation of ENP action plans” (COM (2007) 774 final, page 11), whereas in the communication on the Western Balkans “Enhancing the European perspective” (COM (2008) 127), the Commission proposes a new facility to promote civil society and dialogue.

Such a facility should not just be about funding but part of the wider development of civil dialogue and partnerships between civil society, national governments and EU Institutions. In theory, a win-win situation could be created. Civil society stands to gain from the support of the EU for the process of reforms and the adoption of European standards. For the EU, civil society is a watchdog active precisely in the areas where reforms are most sensitive, an independent source of information and advice. National politicians also

recognise, but by no means unanimously, that they need the critical support of an independent civil society to achieve the reforms, which will bring them closer to the Union. As one national report states, “the building up of the sustainable “triangle” – Civil society – the EU and national governments is expected to be completed in due time.”

The national reports and the conference’s outcomes reveal however to different degrees, the difficulties that have to be overcome to achieve such an objective:

- Enlargement fatigue in Western Europe and the absence of clear EU perspectives for the ENP countries are coupled with some reforms faltering. National reports make clear the dilemma of civil society organisations (CSOs) being in the forefront of the process of transition and change, but at the same time being held back in their development by its uncertainties and political setbacks.
- In pursuing reforms such as respect for human rights, better governance, independence of the judiciary, integrity of domestic war crimes proceedings and reconciliation there is insufficient questioning of whether civil society has the necessary capacity, and there is the danger that it can become a mere instrument of donor-driven priorities. There is little sense of a longer-term strategy to create a sustainable civil society in which the activities of different donors would be coordinated.
- In EU policies on partnership, it is a step forward that the legal instruments for the 2007 – 2013 legal instruments make clear reference to civil society not only as a potential beneficiary of funds but also as a partner in the strategy, programming and evaluation of national action plans under EU external assistance. From the national reports, it is clear that there is however no progress, except for a few initiatives. The EU has a major problem with implementation of its legal framework.

Against this background, recommendations in the national reports show strong convergence on action required to create a European civil society space. It is a sign of quite remarkable progress over the last 10 years that such a vision is not only possible, but also realistic. A common vision shared across countries as diverse as those in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe is emerging irrespective of the stage that governments have reached in their relations with the EU. Civil society does not necessarily make a distinction between candidates and neighbouring countries and therefore advocates that the new civil society facility should be spread across the Region.

Following recommendations to the EU Institutions and national governments are formulated:

1. Listen to civil society

The basic but overlooked demand from across the region to listen to civil society is well summed up in one report: “Everything which is required from EU partners (donor partners and civil society partners) is to listen and understand”. Therefore, the EU as a donor has to have reflexes and be ready to change its approach. Too often donors are following their own agenda, and are not listening to the needs of CSOs. After a decade or more of experimentation and projects which has led to a significant development of the NGO community, the next stage must be to give this community a greater say in the shaping of the policies for enlargement and the EU neighbourhood. This means that the engagement with civil society has to occur at a much earlier stage before national strategies are formulated. There is no evidence that is happening. In this respect, all reports have comments and expect Commission delegations in their country to play a role for civil society dialogue. In particular, national governments gain from listening to civil society in order to take into account the concerns of socially excluded and minority groups which

do not have sufficient voice in the decision-making process and to be made aware of emerging social trends.

2. Develop a long-term strategy for a sustainable civil society

From the national reports and the Ljubljana conference, a long-term strategy for a sustainable civil society is demanded. Lessons could be learned from the experience of new EU Member States since the fall of the Berlin wall. Early support from foundations and the European Commission through civil society development grants did bring about a situation where NGOs first developed the capacity to take advantage of larger-scale pre-accession funds and structural funds afterwards. Such a longer-term strategy included the gradual introduction of more favourable tax regimes and government funds. Without longer-term perspectives, there can be no guarantee that a strong European civil society will emerge in the Western Balkans and neighbouring countries similar to that in new member states. On the contrary, NGOs may be diverted from long-term sustainability and expected to carry out an advocacy and monitoring role in the national reform process without having first acquired the necessary capacity and public support. There is also a danger that “certain areas remain constantly in focus whereas others remain without any support.” As one report puts it, “Donors should choose the strategic support of civil society and avoid financing of short-term projects.” Capacity building has to be demand-led and respond to the real needs of the organisations.

3. Focus on creating a supportive environment for CSOs sustainability

From the national reports it is evident that one reason for a gap between the theory and practice of partnership is the lack of structures within the government. The national reports raise issues, which concern the legal, fiscal and administrative environment that is in

some cases prohibitive, and rarely described as more than adequate. The EU (through DECIM under recommendation n° 9) should help promote policies and exchange of best practice in creating a legal and fiscal environment to encourage the right of association and the growth of civil society. Similarly, administrative reforms and better governance should include relations with civil society. Often at the instigation of NGOs or international donors, governments and parliaments have initiated reforms and frameworks of cooperation with civil society, and either set up appropriate offices within or outside the administration for relating with civil society, or have promised to do so. Consultation is often a legal requirement but methods of implementation are partial. Some countries, such as Croatia, have initiated a comprehensive set of enabling instruments, but this is more the exception than the rule. Compacts (official agreements between CSOs and national governments), for example, are an interesting model - like that of Estonia - covering all aspects of relations between civil society and government.⁸ In many new EU member states, and accession countries, intermediary bodies are the link between the government and NGOs has been a useful capacity building tool. There is no single European model to create an enabling environment for civil society; each country has to work out its own response to include a set of strategies such as those outlined and developed fully in the national reports.

4. Improve access to documents and fill in the information gaps

In general, the country reports show that information about the EU is improving at least for public documents. There is however insufficient transparency and access to documents when it comes to consultations with stakeholders on the national strategy. There is evidence in the national reports that early drafts of working docu-

⁸ See the website of the Compact Commission in the UK: www.thecompact.org.uk

ments from the European Commission or the national governments are not reaching NGOs. Even where they are available, it is very difficult for NGOs to relate to them. “Examinees claim that strategic documents regarding EU external policies and financial assistance from the EU are not available and understandable for them, because they are not translated into their language.” Either there should be official translations of documents or intermediary bodies should undertake this task. Furthermore, the same report stated “so far the communication from the EU level, as well as from the level of national authorities is mainly unilateral and does not include CSOs in the process of creating important documents and policies.” But not everything can be expected of public authorities particularly to reach and involve small NGOs in Europe. Each country should have an NGO portal with translations, adapting information exchange to and from the EU national governments and other organisations. All the reports point to the need for governments and EU delegations to develop communication tools and transparency measures to reach beyond an “inner circle”.

5. Put the partnership principle into practice

The legal texts requiring partnership are difficult to implement and in no country in the Region is civil society being involved by national governments in the determination of strategies or action plans to implement neighbourhood or pre-accession policies. “None of the organisations that completed the questionnaire was consulted” is a critical refrain. As one report puts it, “CSOs (especially those in peripheral areas) do not have any idea about strategy papers and programmes at this early stage.” The national reports are based on a wide circulation of the questionnaire but still fail to come up with any firm evidence of the partnership principle being applied. The only positive examples they mention are initiatives by think tanks, sometimes in association with NGOs and meetings with Commis-

sion delegations about specific programmes, rather any involvement with national strategies. The Commission should remind the governments of their legal obligations and ask them to come forward with consultation plans for implementation of the partnership principle at all stages of the design, programming and evaluation of the national action plan. EC delegations should make civil society participation mandatory in policy shaping and programming process; provide transparent and operational mechanisms for structured and regular consultation to include small and local level NGOs. Without extensive application of the partnership principle to include CSOs, the possibilities for absorption of EU funds will in any case be limited.

6. Help in building coalitions among CSOs

In its communication on a strong European neighbourhood policy, the Commission suggests “the organisation of a platform for civil society representation on ENP issues would be a welcome development.” The national reports lend support to this view to the extent that “coalition building is a condition for interaction with EU institutions and national authorities because single CSOs... are hardly to be heard in the process.” They also show that where CSOs have been heard, it is through such coalition building on European issues. Creating such coalitions is not an easy task because national action plans and strategies often concern a wide range of CSOs such as advocacy as well service delivery NGOs (from social exclusion and minorities to rural development and environmental protection NGOs). Moreover, there is a need not only for building general coalitions; they can be especially effective when they are targeted on specific issues and sectors of the population. Particularly among CSOs at an early stage of development, there is recognition of the value and efficacy of coalitions, but also criticism that they are not sufficiently open and inclusive and that the dialogue concentrates on a small number

of large NGOs and think tanks. Technical assistance from the funds should be made available to allow for the creation of coalitions and support services to CSOs .

7. Train CSOs on how to access EU funds

To support coalition building and to include small and peripheral organisations, training in how the strategy, programming and evaluation for the EU funds actually works can help increase the capacity of CSOs to participate. On the one hand, many respondents to the questionnaire said that EU funds usage is too complex for young non-governmental organisations and that the only possibilities for access were often as a subcontractor or as a partner with a EU based NGO and larger international organisations. On the other hand, to the extent that CSOs have the necessary training and are able to work in consortia with other interests in the context of the national action plan, the programmes do offer more scope for making a sustainable contribution to improving quality of life in the local community. Technical assistance from the funds should be used to carry out training sessions on a regional basis. The proposal to open up TAIEX to train not only officials, but also CSOs, is welcome in this respect and could encourage partnership between the governmental and non-governmental spheres. CSOs recognise that completing the triangle civil society, EU and national governments- requires training and capacity building for state's officials dealing with civil society issues at national and local levels.

8. Strengthen the capacity of small organisations

The national reports all point to the danger that EU strategies and action plans lead to concentration on larger NGOs and that small NGOs and those in remote and peripheral areas are receiving no information and no possibilities for involvement. There are models, including those within the new member states for re-granting in-

struments for small associations and support for micro-projects. The setting up of civil society development foundations is a useful model and one of them is available in Croatia. They can be particularly useful for small associations if they have regional branches. Efforts by foundations and other donors to come together have also made it easier to create small grants and seek money for exploratory projects. As pointed out in some national reports, small NGOs can find a solution to accessing EU funds by seeking out a larger lead partner and being a sub-contractor. It is though frequently mentioned in the reports that smaller local associations are outside the circle of EU information, let alone consultation, and are not connected to the Internet. Yet they represent 90% of any viable civil society. EU institutions and national governments should improve this situation by engaging different stakeholders such as community foundations, civil society development organisations and NGO support structures. They bring together a wide spectrum of partners, which could be linked to EU programmes.

9. Encourage donor coordination

If the long-term aim is a sustainable civil society, coordination among donors is essential since no single donor – whether governmental or non-governmental - can do this alone. DECIM (Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information mechanism) is a pioneering instrument of the European Commission, the World Bank and foundations. It is the nearest response to many of the concerns in the national reports for a strategic long-term approach to civil society. DECIM promotes a holistic approach covering CSO legal framework, financial sustainability, public advocacy, delivery of social services and networking. The national reports do point out some instances of donor fragmentation or duplication with support for basically the same projects carried out by different organisations, but also gaps in support, particularly for small local organisations. DECIM

operates currently at the international level through exchange of information and seminars for practitioners, CSOs and academics. It is though beginning an operation on the ground in Croatia this year, which should be spread to other countries in the Region. On the basis of the follow up to this declaration and the completion, publication and discussion of the national reports, it could be useful to assess progress and make proposals for the future in a civil society – DECIM dialogue. One recommendation made for such a dialogue is to include CSOs, not just as beneficiaries but also as responsible partners in the shaping, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

10. Facilitate European networking

The creation of a European civil society space based on equality between civil society within the EU and in the EU neighbourhood should be the objective. As the Commission points out, for example in the recent communication on the Western Balkans (COM (2008)127) there should be an overall objective of increasing the number of opportunities for students, trainees, journalists, NGOs and other sectors to visit the European Institutions and other European countries. All CSOs stress that visa facilitation and liberalisation is an important objective to encourage such people-to-people contacts. Current levels of contacts are low and often discouraged by visa application procedures. To make the idea of a European civil society beyond the EU borders a reality, such people-to-people contacts should offer the prospect of leading to more strategic partnerships and lasting contacts. Three approaches are considered, which are not mutually exclusive:

- Study visits to the EU Institutions and neighbouring countries are an essential part of training programmes, in order to make sense both of European decision-making in practice, on the

spot, and the thinking behind the enlargement and neighbourhood policies. One month or more “scholarships” hosted by European associations can create more lasting contacts. There is scope for donor coordination among foundations and EU youth, volunteering or active citizenship programmes since all offer such training opportunities.

- European civil society umbrella organisations have now developed around the EU Institutions to cover practically every sector of association activity. They should consider opening up their membership to CSOs from the EU neighbourhood, since this is a realistic way for the latter to develop their knowledge of EU policies and participate in the European level funding programmes, which are gradually becoming open to their countries.
- In some of the national reports, the idea of an NGO office in Brussels is seen as a distant prospect and beyond the current means of civil society. It should be borne in mind for the future as a particularly useful way to develop the three-way dialogue between civil society, national governments and the European Institutions mentioned at the outset of these recommendations.

Finally, whilst these recommendations show that there are common concerns among civil society organisations in relation to EU policies, they also show a European diversity. The first and most important of these recommendations – to listen to civil society – might be put into effect with the rest by a series of national seminars. ECAS and its partners will communicate these recommendations officially to the European Institutions and national governments.

By this declaration, we claim that a European citizenship and a civil society space, beyond the EU borders, will make Europe a better place.

List of Civil society organisations that support this declaration:

Academy for Political Development, Croatia
ACIPS, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Albanian Civil Society Foundation, Albania
Association 'BOSPO', Bosnia and Herzegovina
Association for Democratic Prosperity-ZID, Montenegro
Association for Promoting Inclusion, Croatia
Albanian Institute for International Studies, Albania
Association of Local Democracy Agencies, France
Albanian Media Institute, Albania
Association for European Training and Information, Moldova
Association 'MI', Croatia
Association for Civil Society Organization and Civil Initiatives Development-SVIMA, Croatia
Autonomous Women Center, Serbia
Association "B&H WOMAN ", Bosnia and Herzegovina
Association for Supporting and Training Women Candidates – KAD-ER, Turkey
Astra- Anti Trafficking Action, Serbia
Caritas Ruse, Bulgaria
Center for Civic Initiatives – CCI, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Centre for Civic Education, Montenegro
Centre for Community Development, Macedonia
Center for Democracy and Human Rights – CEDEM, Montenegro
Centre for Development of Nonprofit Organizations – CERANEO, Croatia
Center for Development of Non Governmental Organizations (CRN-VO), Montenegro
Centre for Democracy, Serbia
Centre for Democracy –CERD, Croatia
Centre for information service, cooperation and development of NGO's – CNVOS, Slovenia
Center for Institutional Development (CIRa), Macedonia

Center for Promotion of Civil Society, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights, Croatia
Centre for Social Innovations, Belarus
Centre for Sustainable Values, Macedonia
Cenzura - Association for Promotion of Human Rights and Media
Freedoms, Croatia
Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe, Serbia
Civic Initiatives, Serbia
Consumers Organization of Macedonia, Macedonia
COPPEM- Committee Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of the Local
and Regional Authorities, Italy
Common Values, Macedonia
Diakonia Agapes, Albania
Documenta, Croatia
Doga Dernegi, Turkey
Dv international, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Eco-Protection, Macedonia
European House, Hungary
European Movement, Albania
European Movement, Montenegro
Ecologists Movement of Macedonia, Macedonia
European Citizen Action Service, Belgium
European Civic Forum, France
European Youth Forum, Belgium
Euclid Network, UK
Europa House Slavonski Brod, Croatia
EveryChild, Ukraine
Eco Centre, Serbia
Eko-Zadar, Croatia
ECIP Foundation, Bulgaria
Foundation of Local Democracy, Bosnia and Herzegovina
FORS Montenegro, Montenegro
Gong, Croatia
Gurt Resource Centre, Ukraine

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Macedonia
Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia
Impunity Watch, The Netherlands
Initiative and Civil Action - ICVA, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Initiative for Freedom of Expression, Turkey
International Development Alternatives NGO, Moldova
International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine
International Multi-religious Intercultural Centre, Bosnia and Herze-
govina
Institute for International Relations, Croatia
Izbor Plus, Bosnia and Herzegovina
JLEC ERINA, Macedonia
Kosovar Association for Human and Child Rights, Kosovo
Kosovar Civil Society Foundation, Kosovo
Legal information centre for NGOs, Slovenia
Lesbian Group Kontra, Croatia
Macedonian Centre for International Co-operation, Macedonia
Macedonian Centre for European Training, Macedonia
Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Macedonia
Media Centre for Multiculture-‘TOLERANCIJA’, Macedonia
Montenegrin Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Montenegro
National Foundation for Civil Society Development, Croatia
New Europe, Belarus
New Life, Macedonia
Open Society Fund, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Open Society Institute, Brussels
Open Society Institute, Macedonia
Open Society Institute, Montenegro
Organization for Civil Initiatives, Croatia
Partnership for Social Development, Croatia

Platform for development cooperation and humanitarian aid – SLO-
GA, Slovenia
ProRuralInvest, Moldova
Regionalni center za okolje, Slovenia
Research and Documentation Center, Bosnia and Herzegovina
REC Field Office, Kosovo
REC, Turkey
Roma Democratic Development Association-SONCE, Macedonia
Student Exchange National Association, Serbia
Student Union University of Novi Sad, Serbia
Terca, Bosnia and Herzegovina
The AIRE Centre-Advice on individual rights in Europe
The Action for Future, Kosovo
Third Sector Foundation of Turkey – TUSEV, Turkey
'Today for the Future' Community Centre, Albania
Transparency International BiH Chapter, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Turkey Disabled's Education and Solidarity Foundation, Turkey
Useful to Albanian Women, Albania
United Women Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Vesta Association, Bosnia and Herzegovina
VUSMO- Easter-Ukrainian Union of Youth Organizations
Woman Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey, Turkey
Women's Safe House, Montenegro
Youth Alliance Tetovo, Macedonia
Young Europe, Russia
Young Researchers of Serbia, Serbia

If you would like to add your organisation to this list please send
an email to:

kenan.hadzimusic@ecas.org

Report of the international conference

Giving a stronger voice to civil society in the EU neighbourhood

Development of civil dialogue and partnership relations between civil society, national governments and EU institutions

2 April 2008, Brdo (Slovenia)

The international conference “Giving a stronger voice to civil society in the EU neighbourhood – Development of civil dialogue and partnership relations between civil society, national governments and EU institutions” was held at Brdo **under the auspices of Slovenian Presidency of the EU**. The event, which gathered participants from 29 countries of the EU and European neighbourhood, was organised by the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS) and the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) from Brussels in cooperation with the Government Communication Office and the Representation of the European Commission in Slovenia.

At the conference, over 150 participants from NGOs, national governments and EU institutions discussed the position of civil society in the Western Balkan countries, Eastern European ENP partner countries, Turkey and the Russian Federation.

At the **pre-conference informal NGO roundtable**, held a day before the main event, 50 civil society representatives from Albania,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia presented national reports⁹ on the state of dialogue with their respective governments and EU institutions. Based on country reports and conference debates, the representatives of civil society adopted “**The Ljubljana Declaration**”¹⁰. This consists of political recommendations to EU institutions and national governments on listening to civil society and involving it in the decision-making processes, putting the partnership principle into practice and developing a long-term strategy for a sustainable civil society development in the European neighbourhood. Further, the declaration calls upon the EU and national governments to improve access to documents and fill in the information gaps, to help in building coalitions among CSOs, to train the CSOs on how to access EU funds, to provide grants for small organizations and to encourage donor coordination.

Opening of the Conference

The conference opened with welcome speeches from mag. Anita Pipan, Director - General, Directorate for Policy Planning and Multilateral Relations, MFA, the Republic of Slovenia, Jože Gornik, Director of CNVOS and Tony Venables, Director of ECAS, followed by the keynote speaker Jan Truszczyński, Deputy Director General of DG Enlargement.

Anita Pipan from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia¹¹ welcomed the participants on behalf of the Slovenian EU Council Presidency – and emphasised that the Slovenian

⁹ National reports are available at the ECAS web-site: <http://www.ecas-citizens.eu/content/view/76/173/1/4/>

¹⁰ Ljubljana declaration is available at: http://www.ecas-citizens.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=240&Itemid=

¹¹ MFA website: <http://www.mzz.gov.si/en>

Presidency gives special attention to dialogue with civil society and the development of partnership relations between civil society organisations, EU institutions and national governments in both the European neighbourhood policy¹² and the enlargement process¹³. Regarding the role of civil society in these policies, she pointed out that it represents an essential element of democratic public life in every state or region and that future EU enlargement will thus need to be supported by a strong, deep and sustained dialogue among candidate countries and also its civil society organizations, EU Member States and EU institutions.

As regards the Western Balkans, Slovenia supports the establishment of a new facility to promote civil society development and dialogue, as recently proposed by the European Commission in its Communication on the Western Balkans¹⁴. A proactive participation of the civil society in the implementation of the projects in general would considerably contribute to the development of a multiethnic and democratic South Eastern Europe. In the eastern ENP region the implementation of the Action Plans is leading to sustainable reforms and brings results to the citizens, civil society is gradually growing and becoming better organized. Therefore, the national governments as well as the European Union institutions should pay more attention to their needs and assist them in achieving their goals.

In their welcome speeches, the directors of CNVOS and ECAS Jože Gornik and Tony Venables pointed out the excellent opportunity this conference provides for sending a political message about the need to develop real partnership between the European neighbourhood as well as enabling conditions which would facilitate greater

¹² European Commission's ENP website: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm.

¹³ European Commission's Enlargement website: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm

¹⁴ EC Communication: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/balkans_communication/index_en.htm

inclusion of civil society planning and implementing the policies and programmes of the European Union.

Jože Gornik pointed out that the conference itself was a result of such cooperation and partnership, as it was jointly organised by CNVOS, ECAS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and supported by the Ministry of Public Administration, Government Communication Office and the Representation of the European Commission in Slovenia. The Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood policy, which present priority areas of the Slovene EU presidency, both stress the importance of involvement of civil society. As he pointed out, this conference provides an opportunity to make a strong statement about the importance of involvement of civil society in the shaping, implementing and monitoring of the EU strategies and programmes in the EU neighbourhood.

Tony Venables stressed the importance of a long term strategy and vision as well as a partnership principle with both the national governments and the EU institutions. Part of this long-term strategy is creating a valid legal, fiscal and institutional environment. In this regard, DECIM - The Donor Exchange, Coordination, and Information Mechanism¹⁵ is a good initiative by the European Commission and the World Bank, which also represents a pooling of real expertise about civil society from international organisations and private foundations. As he pointed out it is necessary to make a link between the support coming from the EU and what in the long run can be done by the national governments in creating an enabling environment for the civil society development.

As a keynote speaker, **Jan Truszczyński**, Deputy Director General of DG Enlargement¹⁶ concentrated both on the lessons learned

¹⁵ DECIM: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/decim_en.htm.

¹⁶ DG Enlargement: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/enlargement/index_en.htm.

in the previous enlargement and the future plans of the Commission regarding the support to civil society development through the ‘Civil Society Facility’ of the IPA.

He noted that in the previous enlargement CSOs were generally more advanced than their counterparts in the present enlargement countries. Although currently the legal and institutional environment for activities of civil society organisations across Europe is mostly adequate and sufficient, he pointed out some challenges and problems CSOs are faced with, such as lack of implementation of the mandatory consultation tools, the underdeveloped watchdog function of CSOs and low readiness of the citizens to engage in public and civil activities. Mr. Truszczynski pointed out that the legal framework and formal tools for civil society participation will require further adaptation, but that the key prerequisite for effectiveness of civil society is ability and willingness to use these instruments.

Civil society is strengthening democracy and the system of checks and balances. Both bottom up and bottom down civil society has to be heard.

Big lesson from the previous enlargement is to nurture and expand the social capital in all possible ways, and that CSOs are both a manifestation and motor of this social capital formation. Whether they are effective in making the voices heard, solving and addressing common problems, depends on their empowerment, which increases their confidence and ability to influence the decision making process.

Civil society also has a key role to play in the reforms in the context of enlargement. The European Commission’s enlargement strategy has put the civil society dialogue high among priorities and is since 2005 supporting the dialogue projects for the Western Balkans and Turkey – but, as he noted – more has to be done: local

CSO need training in order to strengthen their capacity to play a more active role in the process of the European integration. As in the past enlargement, they can contribute to strengthening the rule of law and development of good governance – which will allow the Western Balkans to get the largest possible added value from their EU membership. In generating more support to the civil society and generating additional layers of motivation for pre-accession – further efforts are needed to put in place a better regulatory framework and public initiatives for civil society support.

In its annual strategy report, the European Commission recognised the need to increase civil society development and announced a new facility to promote development of the dialogue with civil society. Between now and 2010 the EC support should triple in three areas: support to local civic initiatives and civil society building; people to people programmes to familiarise the opinion leaders and stakeholders with EU institutions and policies; support to international partnership actions for multilateral partnerships for transfer of knowledge, innovative practices, forming of networks.

The Facility, which will complement the instrument of EIDHR operated by delegations in the region, will be launched at the civil society conference “Civil Society development in the South East Europe - Building Europe together” and will offer a platform for networking, exchange the best practices, building partnerships, dissemination of information on funding and bring together key actors from the region.

He expressed his hope that the conference will develop into a regular high-level event mobilising attention of decision-makers in the EU and at national level. The conference programme will reflect the priorities of the enlargement strategies: Good governance and democratization, Human rights, social inclusion and development and Environment and sustainable development. It will take into

account the results of the preparatory meeting last December, the work of the EECS, which in 2006 convened the Western Balkans Civil Society Forum and will hold a follow-up meeting in June 2008 in Ljubljana), the work of ECAS and the present event. He said that DG Enlargement was looking forward to the text of the Ljubljana Declaration - regarding it as an important voice from the region - and to using it in the design and shaping of capacity building of the civil society in the region.

Session I: The role of the EU in promoting civil society development and civil space in the countries of European Neighbourhood Policy and Western Balkans

Primož Šporar from the Legal-information Centre for NGOs and the EESC chaired the panel discussion on the role of the EU in promoting civil society development and civil space in the countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Western Balkans – in which several issues for debate were raised:

- What is the place of civil society in EU external policies towards its neighbours?
- Could the EU develop a long-term strategy for civil society empowerment in the EU neighbouring countries?
- How far do the EU external instruments respond to the political and legal environment of the civil society development in the EU neighbourhood?
- Is the EU responsible for establishing this enabling environment?

Wencelas de Lobkowicz, Civil Society Dialogue advisor from the DG Enlargement, explained the details of the action of the European Commission on the dialogue with civil society, which as he pointed out, has been a priority for the European Commission for a very long time.

In 2007 the EC has taken one step further: a strategy document with a new emphasis as to the role of the civil society and a conclusion that additional measures were necessary. This resulted in IPA and led to the new civil society facility.

The approach of the Commission is two-fold: to strengthen policy dialogue and to stimulate a civil society – friendly environment

(legal and financial) – both in the country of origin and in its relation to the European Union. The purpose of this approach is to increase the overall capacity, accessibility and credibility.

He stressed the importance of civil society in the democratization processes. For this end it is important to enforce the dialogue with the civil society counterparts in the EU – which is expected to result in more efficient civil society in the region and raised capacity for public understanding of the EU affairs. What is also needed is dissemination of information on realities closer to the citizens (in order to promote common principles, values and practices) and an improved networking effort (in order to connect both the organisations and countries in the region), which will result in more participation in the public decision-making processes.

The Civil Society Facility under the IPA financial instrument, which represents 13.8 million EUR intended for strengthening the capacity of the civil society and stimulate democracy and EU values – has to be adopted by end of June 2008. In the framework, three initiatives will be launched – technical assistance, people to people initiatives and partnership actions.

Andreas Herdina, Head of Unit in the European Neighbourhood Policy Sector Coordination from DG Relex, pointed out that the ENP, which provides a partnership for reform to immediate neighbours, depends on political resolve of neighbouring societies to bear political and economic cost of reform. Ownership by government is thus essential, but the civil society is vital for the success of reforms. EC cooperates very often with non-governmental organisations in the neighbourhood countries.

The European Commission sees non-governmental organizations as very important in its endeavour to attain the policy aims of the ENP, which are to benefit the societies and seek to change

governance practices. The role of the European Union is that of the facilitator in strengthening civil society. CSOs involved in different areas, such as the protection of the human rights, rule of law, business climate, environment, offer a larger network of interlocutors to the European institutions, which particularly values advocacy groups, active in the monitoring of the implementation of the action plans and effects of reforms on the ground.

Katerina Hadži-Miceva from the ECNL - The European Centre for Not-for Profit Law¹⁷ focused on how the EU can sustain the creation of a supportive legal environment through its programmes. As she pointed out, the European Union has started to promote programs to address this issue, but at the same time over 20 restrictive laws have been adopted since 2005 in the world, affecting civil society organizations – also within the EU and especially in the New Member States. Although there are broad principles that should exist across borders, it is particularly important to know that circumstances in countries are different and that legal environment is only one factor of civil society development and sustainability. Different levels of the progress of relationship between government and non-governmental organizations exist: from the basic legal environment, which allows CSOs to register and carry out their activities, awareness of the importance of CSOs and their support through fiscal and financial benefits, to cooperation for common goals and adoption of mechanisms that deal with relationship with the government. This progressive relationship is accompanied by parallel initiatives on the NGOs side: as the relationship with government grows, so does the relationship with communities and target groups become better. As the general awareness of CSOs importance grows, they strive to create better internal mechanisms in order to become more accountable,

¹⁷ ECNL website: <http://www.ecnl.org/>

transparent and to group into networks, to represent the interests of groups and other stakeholders.

Regarding the role of international actors (EU and other donors and international organizations), it is important that they don't just focus on legal reform, but also concentrate on the follow up and implementation as well as on the support-side mechanisms, as a proper assessment of the broader environment is needed when the legal reform is being prepared. She also emphasized the importance of the local leadership and ownership, as international consultants understand the environment (only) to some extent - ones who understand the local needs best, are NGOs, whose capacity should be strengthened. Addressing the legal reform should therefore be done through openness and wider participation of the civil society – and in a holistic way.

Goran Djurović from Centre for Development of NGOs¹⁸, Montenegro pointed out the responsibilities and role of the European Union in communicating and involving the CSOs – as well as establishing an enabling environment of greater participation of CSOs in creating EU policies on national level.

In Montenegro, there are instruments, which aim at the overall development of the country through better participation of civil society in policymaking. However, the generally accepted view is that the support destined to CSOs does not correspond to the real needs and is not sustained, and that the participation is on a low level in all phases of policymaking (from policy development to the evaluation of its realization), as is the level of real influence of CSOs.

He pointed out that the process of communication and support to CSOs largely depends on the EC delegations, who should there-

¹⁸ CRNVO website: <http://www.crnvo.cg.yu/eng/>.

fore support the sustainability of civil society not only financially but also by involving it in policy making and decision making. He noted that the EU predominantly communicates with the government – and although the CSOs can participate, their impact on EU policies adopted on country level is still limited. To increase it, the EU delegation should support networking on national level and provide sufficient communication channels and an officer in charge, which would facilitate better communication with the NGOs and enable continuous involvement of CSOs. It would also be helpful if the members of European Commission in delegations or from Brussels would more frequently take part in civil society initiatives, which would assure their visible support in building the capacity of the civil society.

Session II: Creating sustainable partnership relations between civil society, EU institutions and national authorities

In the second session participants were split in two working groups - the Western Balkans and Turkey and the Eastern Europe ENP partner countries and Russia – to present and debate the following issues:

- How to cooperate with public authorities in the process of European integration and how to get involved in the shaping of EU policies and programmes?
- What would be the mechanism of cooperation between the EU institutions, the national authorities and the third sector?
- How supportive are EU and national authorities in putting civil society on the political dialogue agenda and preparing and implementing the action plans?
- How do current EU–government aid relations affect the possibilities for CSOs to get engaged in policy dialogue?
- What partnership models are there and what is their relative importance?
- Which effective tools could be envisaged in order to encourage the governments and EU institutions to cooperate with non-governmental actors?

Working Group I: Western Balkans and Turkey

The working group, chaired by **Pavle Schramadei** from the Croatian National Foundation for Civil Society Development¹⁹, began with the presentations of different mechanisms of cooperation, policy dialogue and partnership models between civil society, national governments and the European Commission delegations - in Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia and Turkey.

Aleksandar Krzalovski from Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation – MCIC²⁰, presented the mechanisms of cooperation between civil society, national authorities and the EU institutions.

The National Council of Euro-integrations, in which he is an elected member of the civil society, is a newly established body of the national parliament to deal with the European integration process. It involves both the ruling and opposition political parties as well as other stakeholders of a broader civil society - trade unions, chamber of commerce, religious communities and the representative of the Civic platform of Macedonia. The Government has also established formal cooperation mechanisms with the civil society within its Strategy, adopted last year. The Delegation of the European Commission has an established practice of consultation on certain issues. As he pointed out, the common characteristic of these cooperation mechanisms is the low awareness of the value of civil society involvement in terms of assuring greater support from larger society for policies and achieving a greater consensus of all actors in society on issues relevant to European integration. Although the mechanisms have been formally established on parliamentary or

¹⁹ National Foundation for Civil Society Development: http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/index.php?p=eng_vijesti_i_priopcenja&s=6.

²⁰ MCIC: <http://www.mcms.org.mk/default-en.asp>

governmental level, they still need to be put into practice and accepted by the politicians, who need to understand why involving the civil society is necessary and preferable. In offering some suggestions for improvement, he stressed the need for mandatory consultations and greater support from the EC delegation and the government in this regard.

Igor Vidačak from the Croatian Office for cooperation with NGOs²¹ presented the Croatian experience in building cooperation between CSO and Government in the European integration process. During last 10 years Croatia has made substantial efforts to create more enabling institutional, financial and legal framework.

The policy framework consists of a quite liberal law on associations (law on foundations still has to be improved) and the Strategy on an enabling environment with an action plan attached. Concrete measures are to be adopted in the next 2-3 years, which should create an enabling environment for civil society development, measures drafted jointly by NGOs and the Government.

As the key challenge in strengthening cooperation between the Government and CSOs in the European integration process, he underlined the problem of capacity - not only of the CSOs but of public bodies as well. Currently, there is an imbalance between institutions when it comes to capacities. For the capacity-building of CSOs, a huge amount of financial support comes from state budget. Funds for this end were also foreseen in IPA – particularly for strengthening better monitoring of the implementation of the policies and acquis - related laws in Croatia.

²¹ <http://www.uzuvrh.hr/page.aspx?pageID=73>

Miljenko Dereta from the Civic Initiatives Serbia²² started his presentation of the situation of the civil society in Serbia by stating its biggest problem – the fact that after 8 years of reforms, there is still no law on NGOs, while the existing laws have been qualified as not just bad but threatening to the civil society.

In the last 8 years four draft laws in the area of cooperation with the government were accepted by the Government and entered the Parliament - but have not got to the agenda, because all the governments fell. Not only was the NGO legislation a precondition for Serbia to be accepted by the Council of Europe – without this framework the dialogue becomes relative, as the law is also about the recognition of NGOs, who are now faced by a chain of obstacles. The only institution that formally exists is the Council of the President of the Republic for relations with the civil society, of which Mr. Dereta is a member. It is the only body in which NGOs can influence someone in the executive power to do something for civil society – and to establish some kind of dialogue.

He mentioned both implementation and transparency as areas where NGOs see the role for the EU – through the funding to the state and monitoring of how funds are spent by the government. In this regard, there are double standards, which NGOs find quite disturbing – while the results of the EU's funding for the state are poor, CSOs have to pass all kind of checks.

Džemal Hodžić from the EC delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina²³ introduced the important shifts in civil society support from the Delegation, which were based on the analysis of the civil society

²² <http://www.gradjanske.org/eng/>

²³ <http://www.europa.ba/>

sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina and poor results of the EC funding in the past.

Recently, two comprehensive analyses of the civil society sector were brought to the attention of the EC delegation that pointed out that the vast majority of CSOs has a donor driven image, that no partnership between the civil society and governmental sectors existed on any level and that local funds were allocated in non-transparent manner. Furthermore, the results of the 44 million EUR allocated to CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina were very low. As a result, the EC delegation shifted its support to the civil society through two projects designed under IPA: one for the capacity building of the civil society to take part in the policy dialogue and other for the enforcement of local democracy (through the local disbursement of funding).

Dorian Filote from the EC delegation in Turkey²⁴ presented the cooperation between CSOs and public authorities, the culture of partnership and initiatives of the European Commission to support civil society in Turkey – noting that Turkey is quite different to examples previously presented.

In spite of over 72 million people living in Turkey, 80.000 registered associations, 5000 foundations, 5000 cooperatives/unions/chambers - the level of participation remains low, as only 7,8% of the population are members in CSOs. Turkey is also different in terms of historical development of civil society. In the Central and Eastern Europe CSOs developed after the fall of the communist regime together with the institutions and a new democracy. In Turkey, some were established with the republic, some foundations are acting as an extension of the state and some, such as the chamber of commerce

²⁴ <http://www.avrupa.info.tr/DelegasyonPortal.html?LanguageID=2>

and other professional organisations, are very vocal and very powerful - politically and in terms of their economic strength.

Rana Birden from Turkish Association for Supporting and Training Women Candidates - KADER²⁵ provided the analysis of the situation on EU integration and civil society involvement since Turkey got the 'green light' from the EU in 2004. As she pointed out, Turkey has since then been drifting away from the EU.

With the start of the candidate status, the European Commission has underlined the importance of dialogue with the civil society. The Turkish civil society received this political message, which resulted in many projects and CSOs lobbying. NGO enjoyed more liberal environment and the European Commission has started to support the civil society through capacity-building. However, since 2005 - because of the political climate in Turkey and in the EU - the role of civil society has been more limited in accession process. The NGOs feel that the Commission and other donors are not addressing the right needs and grass-roots organisations. As a result, there are regional disparities and the grass-roots rights-based organisations are facing lack of capacities as well as limited access to the EU funds. This situation is also apparent in activities of CSOs in the EU level – as it is only the big organisations who are participating on EU level or are represented in Brussels. She also pointed to the lack of real cooperation mechanisms (either on political or programming level) with the national government although the officials are organising some consultations.

²⁵ <http://www.ka-der.org.tr/>

Ms. Birden concluded with a recommendation to the CSOs: to advocate greater involvement in the policy-making process and to be more present in Brussels and close to international networks.

The debate that followed the panel discussion, concentrated mainly on the issues of consultation with national government and the EU, the presence of the CSOs in Brussels and programming of the IPA.

Working Group on Eastern Europe ENP partner countries and Russia

Tatyana Poshevalova from the Centre for Social Innovations²⁶ analyzed the cooperation between country authorities, the EU and civil society from the perspective of approaches of the three stakeholders in the Belarus.

She illustrated the government's approach towards the civil society by the fact that the government is itself establishing its own NGOs to take part in EU programs, while the activity of the civil society is hampered. For example, for any public event (in public or even private premises) CSOs need to ask for the permission – those who omit to do this are practically acting outside of the legal framework of the state.

The EU approach has ranged from non-urgency regarding the pace of democratization processes in the mid-nineties, to bewilderment about the lack of effect of substantial financial support by the end of 90-s – to the final realization that they really do not know what to do with the country in 2006.

Cooperation with the government on the other hand should start with the recognition of the nature and goals of different actors (be it regime's GONGs or NGOs) and then progress with creating relations and communication with the regime. She reiterated that it is only possible to get out of the standstill if all sides are recognised as equal. For this, the civil society needs to be strengthened and recognized by the regime as an actor that they would be forced to communicate with.

²⁶ <http://www.csi.by.com/about.htm>

Konstantin Baranov from Young Europe²⁷ introduced the work of his organization, which defends the civil society in the newly independent states and includes Russian and Ukrainian NGOs.

Mr. Baranov pointed out that Russia is quite different from ENP partner countries and pre-accession countries, as its government does not strive to enter the EU. This makes the language of their negotiations different and must be taken into account when considering the triangular relationship between the CSOs, the government and the EU. He also pointed out that CSOs are rarely mentioned in documents on EU – Russia relations, including the (outdated) Russia – EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The only working mechanism for consultations with CSOs is the EU Russia consultation on human rights issues. This mechanism was lobbied for by a group of NGOs in order to voice some issues and participate on a regular basis in consultation on EU level. This group is now elaborating a set of measures to monitor this mechanism. He proposed that the range of issues in the new NGO legislation in Russia should be monitored by European NGOs and that the practice of consultations should improve. For example the EC delegation in Russia could organize some consultations - with the cooperation of the Government - based on their contacts with organizations which have implemented projects with EU funding. He concluded with the proposal to form a formal working group and elaborate on the consultation mechanisms before the next conference in Zadar.

Natalia Solcan from the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration²⁸ offered a current situation and strategy for development of cooperation between the Moldovan authorities and CSOs.

²⁷ <http://www.youngeurope.org/>

²⁸ <http://www.mfa.gov.md/consular-information/>.

The objective of gradual European integration is shared by both the political forces and the civil society. The Action plan, which was endorsed 3 years ago, allowed the country to progress towards EU structures and presented a turning point in the development of a framework for cooperation with national civil society. The MFA included the civil society even before this. In evaluating the implementation of the action plan, she concluded that the cooperation with the EU was diversified and enhanced and created a solid base for continuation of reforms – respect of human rights, of judiciary, fight against corruption, and cooperation with the civil society.

Cooperation with the civil society was put in a solid framework of the Action plan, which deals with legislative framework, creating mechanism for implementation of the Action plan and the implementation process.

Arina Kraijdan from Moldovan Association for European Training and Information²⁹ agreed that the implementation of the Action plan has forced the Moldovan government to think about the necessity of cooperation with civil society in order to achieve an objective of European integration.

Before 2005 it was not clear to the civil society what the EU meant, so Association for European Training and Information, created as a result of a project supported by the German embassy, trained and informed the central and local authorities and NGO leaders about the EU. It has also implemented three projects with ECAS, which included the

conference about possibilities of EU programmes, the guide on associations and cooperation with EU institutions and visits for the leaders of NGOs to EU institutions.

²⁹ www.eustrainers-moldova.org

The civil society has the possibility of cooperating with national authorities on EU matters through mechanisms envisaged in the Memoranda of cooperation, round tables and the strategy of EU communication. But apart from achievements, she also mentioned some problems in this dialogue. Although the civil society is consulted, these consultations are not always taken into consideration, as even the law on public associations included only a limited number of proposed amendments of NGOs. She pointed out that not only consulting, but doing so in a transparent manner and including the civil society's input into decisions is important. In 2007 many ministries signed memoranda of cooperation with CSOs in their field – but it's time to put it into practice, to form working groups, develop mechanisms for support to NGOs and delegate some social problem-solving to the CSOs.

As regards the communication with the EC delegation in Moldova, established in 2005, she pointed out that although their door is always open, other mechanisms should be developed – such as contacts for communication with the civil society which would convey the messages between the EC delegation and Moldovan civil society.

Tetyana Danyliv from Ukrainian GURT Resource Centre for NGO Development³⁰ presented the main trends and challenge related to civil society development and the communication and cooperation with the EU institutions and government. First, she emphasized the importance of information. Not only is it a prerequisite for making good decisions, but the more informed the CSOs are, the more they are able to take an equal position while building partnerships with government and EU institutions.

³⁰ <http://gurt.org.ua/eng.html>

Among the traits of civil society development she pointed to the growing cooperation with the government and increased expertise of CSOs, which can be observed on different levels, but is mainly true for local CSOs, as local governments are more aware about how they can use CSOs for executing their tasks. Among negative trends, she pointed out the decreasing funding opportunities for Ukrainian CSOs, as many donors are leaving and the new ones have not started their programmes. There is also a growing gap in training and resources in big cities and local communities, so organisations which are already skilled in terms of fundraising and communication have more success.

She concluded that the main challenge in cooperation with the EU institutions is the access to information, which is quite poor for CSOs - on policies, regulations, funding opportunities, as often there is no translation, and documents are not distributed to CSOs. Furthermore, CSOs are often regarded as recipients of funds and not real partners, and the process of consultation is not well established and is unsystematic.

Session III: Involving civil society in the “aid effectiveness” agenda

Issues for debate in the last session of the conference, chaired by **Christine Bedoya**, Director of the TRIALOG³¹, were:

- How do donors contribute to sustainable development of civil society?
- Which mechanisms could be used to involve civil society in the programming of donors’ priorities?
- What are the perspectives within the DECIM framework? What are the first DECIM outcomes – developed donors’ synergies?
- Do donors’ programmes fully reflect the needs of CSOs at regional and local levels? How may CSOs participate in the monitoring of the process of donors’ and government performance against aid effectiveness commitments?

Irma Mežnarič from the Ministry of Public Administration³² concentrated on Slovenian experiences with donation funding and development of civil society.

In the period of accession of Slovenia to the European Union, some key experiences were acquired. NGOs were asked to submit their remarks on proposals which the government had submitted to the parliament before sending them off to Brussels. Only a small number of NGOs (six) expressed interest in cooperating. Furthermore, the government officials did not find proposals either constructive nor useful and the (subsequent) government’s analysis pointed to the lack of capacity of NGOs. As a result a strategy plan

³¹ <http://www.trialog.or.at/start.asp?ID=107>

³² <http://www.mju.gov.si/en/>

was created under which the government co-financed the CNVOS and wider NGOs and committing to help with their development. The strategy produced good results – when NGOs were included in the preparation of a national development plan, the government received considerably larger number of comments from NGOs.

Another good recent example is the priority of capacity building for the civil dialogue (reserved for NGOs within the Structural funds), which is unique in the EU, as the Government financed the NGO needs assessment, priority capacity building of NGO's and offered technical support and a 50 % prepayment. A monitoring body for both the implementation of structural fund and technical support will be created.

She concluded that civil society is the only guarantee for a long term sustainable and sound development and underlined that long-term donation instead of the short-term financing is needed and welcomed the DECIM initiative, as it promotes coordination of donor activities.

Marija Adanja from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs³³ of Slovenia concentrated on aid effectiveness and the need for close cooperation of the EC and national governments with NGOs on development issues.

The European Union and the Member States are called upon to set up more concrete targets in order to improve the quality of their development policy and the European Union encourages the participation of all stakeholders in the development process. The local NGOs and national parliaments must play an important role in this and the European Commission could improve consultation with civil society and partners.

³³ MFA: <http://www.mzz.gov.si/en>.

She stressed the policy focus of the EU on local governments and pointed out the need for close cooperation of the European Commission and national governments with NGOs on development issues. In this respect she pointed out three main roles of NGOs: Advocacy on main development issues (e.g. their watchdog actions); Aid delivery and Awareness raising and understanding of development – in mobilizing the citizens to make them aware of their responsibility in the development process.

Irene Payne from the OECD³⁴ underlined the two areas of work of OECD, which give more opportunities to NGOs to actively participate in policy-making.

She pointed out that OECD, itself part of civil society, is devising long-standing programs, as the partnership is a long-term process. The Paris Declaration ³⁵gives a lot of opportunities to non-governmental organizations on both the state and regional level. Furthermore, the OECD has moved from governmental level coordination to more consultative approach, which call for active participation. On the other hand, the governments have also made progress with regards to transparency and accountability. The conference on inclusive policy-making is going to be held this July in Ljubljana under the auspices of Slovenian EU presidency.

Aleš Kranjc Kušlan from SLOGA³⁶ underlined the civil society's contribution to aid effectiveness agenda and warned against the decrease of the ODA in the EU.

34 OECD: http://www.oecd.org/home/0,2987,en_2649_201185_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.

35 http://www.oecd.org/document/15/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html.

36 SLOGA: <http://www.sloga-platform.org/main>

International civil society organizations, gathered in CONCORD³⁷, have adopted a position paper, entitled “Delivering better aid”³⁸, which contains three demands: on *democratic ownership* (which is important to deepen the cooperation of NGOs and to encourage the participation of civil society in all levels of project-management cycle - planning, implementing, evaluation, assessing etc.), *more ambitious commitments* about conditionality, tied-aid and technical assistance as well as *transparency*, which is a precondition for democratic ownership. He also stressed the need for co-existence of aid quality and aid quantity and voiced a concern that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) of the European Union went down in 2007.

The debate that followed the panel discussion, concentrated mainly on the issues of donors and Commission’s support to NGOs, the need to finance smaller NGOs and capacity building – both on NGO and Governmental side.

37 CONCORD: <http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=4&language=eng>.

38 http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/internetdocumentsENG/4_Publications/3_CONCORDs_positions_and_studies/Positions2008/FINAL-EU-Aidwatch-position-Accra-2008---Jan08.doc

Closing session: Concluding remarks and presentation of the “Ljubljana Declaration”

The concluding act of the conference was presentation of the work and conclusions of the two working groups and the adoption of the Ljubljana declaration. Regarding the document, Tony Venables pointed out that it presents shared concerns and values, although actual solutions will differ because of the diversity in the region. It represents a start of a process, which will be assessed in the next conference in Zadar in September 2008.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

ALBANIA



**Prepared by Pandeli Theodori,
Albanian civil society foundation**

1. About the survey

The partnership principle is a tool for improving effectiveness of bottom-up strategies and empowerment of Civil Society and forms an important part of the Action Plans established under the Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and of the pre-accession process.

In order to assess the Role of Civil Society in the EU neighbouring countries and namely in Albania, we based our process of collecting information from CSOs through the survey compiled by ECAS. The survey was delivered in electronic form to a large group of 42 NGOs spread out throughout the country. This number con-

sists of 9% of total registered Albanian NGOs or more than 30% of active Albanian NGOs. Only a small number of 14 NGOs answered the questionnaires and sent the feedback to ACSF. In the meantime, ACSF contacted directly Co-Plan, NET, CAFOD-Albania, EDEN, ECAT and MCDC to collect directly the information from the executive directors of the above mentioned organizations and this brought the number of responses to 20. The majority of the contacted CSOs are Tirana based but we have had feedback from Kukës and Shkodra (Northern Albania), Durrës and Tirana (Central Albania). Very little feedback came from south and south-eastern Albania. The most reliable information comes from three Civil Society Development Centres (out of 6 such centers existing in Albania), the Municipalities Association (which is a nation wide organization), and CRCA a well known organization which is focused on children's rights. Directly contacted CSOs are involved in the field of participatory habitat management/development, (Co-Plan) capacity building (NET) and environment (EDEN and ECAT).

We believe that the resume derived from the collected feedback will enable the representatives of CSOs to send a political strong message to the EU in order to develop a coherent and coordinated strategy for sustainable civil society development in all the participating countries and for a successful implementation of the partnership principle. The building up of the sustainable “triangle” – CS-EU and National Governments is expected to be completed in due time and bring its fruits as an immediate result of the action.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The current state of cooperation between civil society in Albania and the national government and between civil society and the Eu-

ropean Commission delegation based on the majority of the answers given through the questionnaire results as follows:

- The CSOs were not consulted during the drafting of documents such as Enlargement Strategy papers, Accession partnership and Action plans for the implementation of the priorities of these partnerships. The CSOs admit that very little is known about the above mentioned documents. Some of the questionnaires emphasize that during the process only a reduced number of think tank organizations pre-selected by the Ministry of Integration might have been consulted.
- The QUALITY of information on EU external policies and financial assistance is assessed as “poor” at the EU and other sources level and “fair” at local level.
- The main difficulties to access and understand the information of partnership between EU and neighbourhood civil society was described as: CSOs (especially those of peripheral areas) do not have any idea about strategy papers and programmes at this early stage. They have not requested any such documents reach due to lack of interest and no action was taken to inform CSOs on this matter.
- The assessment of the effectiveness of the coalitions and networks in influencing the decision making process, from the CSOs of Albania was between “fair” and “good”. The impression is that the coalitions are good but not very inclusive because only a small number of organisations have the chance of participating. For small CSOs it is too hard to be represented and their role is very limited even when they are included in the network. They are (in the same way, here) as inactive as they are in general daily activities.
- Coalition building is a condition for interaction with EU institutions and national authorities because single CSOs especially

those of limited and modest activities are unlikely to be heard in the process.

In order to evaluate the CSOs involvement at the national level in the different levels of policy and programme planning and implementation we must emphasize that politically speaking the government accepts and expresses this involvement as part of its policy. Very few pre-selected CSOs (think tanks) might have been involved in the process just to comply with this international requirement. In practice very little is being done. Interest groups, through their CSOs, are not involved in the process. We have a clear example with the industrial area in the coastal southern city of Vlora. The citizen's action represented by a group of CSOs and the citizens themselves are protesting against the set-up of this so called industrial area in Vlora.

At international level, the following results have been obtained from the questionnaires:

- The CSOs are not involved in monitoring of Enlargement / SAP action plan implementation. The majority of CSOs believe that they receive not a single signal from the Government or any other institution with respect to this issue.
- At the operational level, which means the implementation of the EU Programmes/ projects such as PHARE, CARDS and other community actions the answer is "YES", CSOs have been involved mainly with small projects. There are cases of direct roles played by local CSOs but there are many cases when the International CSOs based in the country or outside play the main role and the local CSOs are involved as partners. We must emphasize that such partnerships in some programmes have been mandatory.
- CSOs are not always the main beneficiaries; they have the role of a partner especially in the projects when an EU member

state organization should be the main applicant. The possibility of sub granting should be taken in to consideration seriously: in many occasions the local CSOs can not compete with the EU Member state organizations due to the lack of capacities. In these cases the sub granting might give a hand to local organizations to participate and play a role.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

The main opportunities to get involved in shaping EU external policies are international networks and a few international meetings through joint projects. All this is initiated by the network or the international organizations. The Albanian Government and the EC Delegation in Tirana offer very little in this respect and access is very complicated and almost impossible.

The same situation or even worse is with the opportunities to get involved into Monitoring of EU External policies. The result from the feedbacks is that:

- There is no a plan to get the CSOs involved.
- The EC Delegation does nothing to get the local CSOs involved in the process.
- No regular contacts exist between the Ministry of Integration and the CSOs. If there are a few contacts they are only with the preferred CSOs.

Meanwhile, the main opportunities to get involved with the implementation of the EU Programmes/projects are the calls for proposals launched by EC Delegation-Tirana or the European Commission in Brussels. At this moment there is a total black out and no call for proposals are coming from either the source.

The lack of donor co-ordination currently undermines sustainable civil society development. Years ago (in 1999, during the Kosovo crisis) there were weekly co-ordination meetings held between international donors and local CSOs. Today nothing happens and donor fragmentation or duplication occurs on certain occasions (eg. USAID finances the Guide book to Albanian NGOs meanwhile there is an Albanian NGOs web site online which is financed by the SOROS Foundation, etc)

The CSOs in Albania do not have a strong voice at EU Level. They believe that being part of an EU Association (partnerships built with EU Organizations) would give another chance to be heard. A national representative office in Brussels would be a luxury at this moment for the Albanian NGOs. They lack both capacities and trustfulness at the moment.

Implementation is an option for most of CSOs in Albania, whilst monitoring and evaluation is a challenge for most of them. Co-operation with international NGOs is seen as a must for the Albanian CSOs.

Currently, there is no large scale capacity building programme for CSOs in Albania. Similar programmes have been implemented in the past with a different kind of mapping of CSOs. The situation at the present moment is totally different and there is a very weak Civil Society in the remote areas and small cities.

Technical assistance and twinning instruments might be helpful for the CSOs in Albania.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The CSOs were not consulted during the drafting of documents such as Enlargement Strategy papers, Accession partnership and Action plans for the implementation of the priorities of these part-

nerships. The CSOs admit that very little is known about the above mentioned documents.

CSOs (especially those of peripheral areas) do not have any idea about strategy papers and programmes at this early stage and they have not been requested to reach for these documents due to lack of interest; no action was taken to inform CSOs on this matter.

The impression is that the coalitions are good but not very inclusive because only a few organisations have the chance of being included.

The assessment of the effectiveness of the coalitions and networks in influencing the decision making process, from the CSOs of Albania was between fair and good.

A regular action plan must be in place in order to disseminate information to all NGOs and avoid the creation of elite or favourite CSOs.

CSOs are not consulted during the programming process such as IPA MIPD or IPA multi- annual and annual action programmes.

Study visits are fruitful but more attention should be given to a national plan of capacity building for CSOs in the field by capable CSOs in the country or in cooperation with international CSOs.

The legal CSO-framework in Albania is neither threatening nor friendly. Attempts by the government have been taken to threaten NGOs by inadequate steps such as to register NGOs in the same register as the businesses, mandatory VAT for NGOs etc.

The improvement of the legal framework for NGOs can be done either by the non-profit sector or by cooperation with the government.

For the improvement of consultation methods at EU level and at national level a national programme must be initiated and imple-

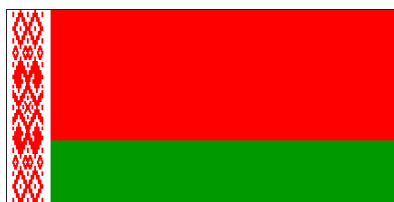
mented by the EC Delegation in cooperation with the most active NGOs in the country.

A similar plan should be started and implemented in the remote areas away from the capital.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

BELARUS



**Prepared by Tatiana Poshevalova
Centre for Social Innovations**

1. About the survey

The survey has been completed with the use of the ITS questionnaire and other survey data, which were carried out among other Belarusian NGOs in 2007. Questionnaires were distributed through NGO channels and in a targeted way, but not many answers were sent back. Partly it can also be explained by the fact that during the year of 2007 in Belarus there were a number of surveys of the Third Sector's potential and its relations with donors and European structures, and people got tired of questionnaires. Still, it also has to do

with the fact that in general only a very small circle of Belarusian NGOs has an inkling of what this questionnaire asks about.

I have based my report on data not only of the ITS questionnaire, but also dialogue meetings, 30 in-depth interviews carried out with leading Belarusian NGOs cooperating with the EU countries, as well as the survey of donor policy implemented by the Belarusian Pro-Democratic NGOs Assembly in 2007.

Thus, the survey's participants were the largest Belarusian NGOs experienced in cooperating with EU programmes, and regional and local NGOs which are the Assembly's members.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of the partnership principle

At the level of interaction between civil society and national governments, the situation cannot be named "cooperation" at all. The state systematically excludes NGOs, putting them into the marginal sphere. It is done by both discriminatory legislation and current policy. Civil society's existence is not foreseen by the ruling Belarusian regime's tasks and programmes. Only so called GONGs ("Governmental Non-Governmental Organizations", inherited from the Soviet Union or created directly by the state bodies and dependent on them) are recognized by the state as cooperation partners and sometimes receive the state budget financing.

"As the case stands, it is impossible to speak about any relevance of civil society's influence on the situation in the state because NGOs are deprived of the basic tools of this influence such as publicity, transparency, wide involvement of citizens, etc."

Thus, NGOs are not involved at all in processes of forming national policies. Associations and coalitions (as well as separate legally existing NGOs) cannot be created without the authorities' direct sanction. There is criminal liability for actions on behalf of an NGO

unregistered according to the administrative procedure. A registered NGO's upkeep demands lots of money to be spent on carrying out requirements of legislation concerning the office in an office building (with huge payments for rent) and on conducting unreasonably difficult book keeping. The implementation of projects financed by foreign donors, demands the state's sanction - a procedure which can take months and years, while the state's refusal (the most frequent answer) cannot be appealed.

At the same time, Belarusian NGOs' basic source of means is donor grants. The current condition of relations with donor organizations cannot be named "cooperation" either. However, there is a certain difference in the relationship between Belarusian civil society and EU programmes and other inter-state and private donors.

The situation and the relationship between Belarusian civil society organizations and EU programmes taking place in Belarus can be characterized as follows:

- The ENPI Program does not cover Belarus to the full. Since 1997, the Belarusian regime has been isolated from the European assistance programmes; during this period there were only several governmental programmes (e.g. the national frontier installation). There were also the Cross Border cooperation programmes and then the Interreg programme, but Belarusian NGOs had a limited access to them as they were oriented on local authorities, while in the Belarusian political situation puts NGOs in an unequal position. Since then, Belarusian NGOs could take part in a very limited number of programmes
- TACIS special programme to support civil society, announced in 1998 and implemented in 2003; IBPP programme in 2002-2004, from which Belarusian NGOs were later excluded because of their projects' non-registration and impossibility of their legal implementation;

- The decentralized cooperation programme which worked for two years and which was also replaced after 2006 by other tools. At present, Belarusian civil society can take part in a number of EU thematic programmes (such as Non State Actors and Local Authorities, EIDHR, Investment in People; today one local programme, Non State Actors and Local Authorities, is announced. Still, it has only become possible since 2008.
- Up to 2008 in Belarus, there was no Delegation of the European Commission, and only in the beginning of 2008 a decision on the creation of such a delegation was finally accepted. Before that, the functions of the embassy were carried out by the Delegation of the European Commission in Kyiv.
- Belarusian NGOs were not practically involved in the process of planning the EU policy and programmes. Sometimes, there were consultations of representatives of the EU Delegation in Kyiv or officials from Brussels with NGOs, and politicians, organized by the TACIS Branch Office in Minsk. The initiative of carrying out such consultations belonged to representatives of the European Commission.
- Belarusian NGOs participated in the process of carrying out EU programmes as partners in projects since the mid 1990's. As basic applicants of projects, they began to participate approximately since 1998. Project implementation as a main partner was first limited by lack of information and knowledge of how programmes are meant to work, by inefficiency in designing projects, and then – by difficulties with registration of the projects in Belarus. For many organizations, to work through a partner has become the only way to implement a project. Accordingly, basic responsibility for a project was carried by the main applicant from an EU country; it was the applicant who communicated with the European Commission. The basic responsibility for a project's implementation was carried by

a partner from Belarus. There were not more than 5-6 cases where Belarusian organizations were the main applicant and the main implementing party of EU projects. The only exception was the EU Civil Society program of micro-grants implemented in 2003.

- There are cases of reprisals by the Belarusian authorities against organizations that carried out projects within EU programmes (the cases of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee and the Social Innovations Centre), when the representation of the European Commission had to stand up for their granters; and these cases are not closed yet.
- Many basic partners from the EU countries, especially Poland and other neighbouring countries, used the difficult situation in the Belarusian Third Sector to take a position of an intermediate donor, re-granting, thus taking the position of those who influence the policy of donors for Belarus. A partner from an EU country often tried to impose his/her own vision of purposes and methods of work on Belarusian NGOs, supported by priorities of EU programmes like “know-how transfer”.
- Belarusian NGOs’ participation in programming is restrained, first of all, by Belarusian civil society’s weakness; NGOs activity’s compelled opacity (because of fear of repression), separateness and absence of trust between different groups in the Third Sector. They cannot take advantage to the full even of those opportunities which are presented today by EU programmes both at the level of project implementation and at the level of programming.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

Challenges:

“EU programmes are still built on the attitude to Belarus as to a country in transition, while it is not so. Belarus needs system changes which are only possible with an innovative, individual and reflective approach to planning and carrying out of long-term programmes aimed at deep changes”.

Belarusian civil society organizations do not know mechanisms of formation of EU foreign policy, responsible institutions and persons. They do not believe in general that it is possible to influence the EU policy.

There are not enough qualified personnel who could perform such work on behalf of the leading Belarusian organizations, even in the capital and big cities.

In civil society, there is no consensus about priorities of Belarus (Belarusian civil society) in its relation to the EU foreign policy. In Belarus in general, there are no real coalitions at all.

The weakness of subjectivity: Belarusian NGOs are inclined to shift on the EU the responsibility for the situation in the state and NGOs' own passivity and lack of advocacy experience.

All these prove Belarusian organizations' weak readiness for dialogue with the EU.

Decisions at the EU level are accepted too slowly if compared to the changes of the situation in the state – therefore, the decisions “are late” and do not correspond to the current situation.

Belarusian NGOs' communication with EU organizations and institutions is hampered. They do not have enough opportunities to contact organizations in Brussels.

The conditions of programmes suggested by the EU, concerning their support of civil society in Belarus, cannot often be carried out by civil society organizations, or bring the opposite results (i.e. support to GONGO and the authorities' requirements).

In Belarus, there is a weak level of knowledge about the EU common policy towards Belarus; there are more myths and distortions than real information.

Opportunities

The Belarusian Third sector has an extremely high level of education and looks very intellectual in comparison with even neighbouring countries. Its staff need specific skills and experience which was not present in the country before, and special efforts to build trust, but the basic level is rather strong.

Belarusian NGOs will be ready for dialogue with the EU only after they have started this dialogue, learning during the course of dialogue. There is a need for special efforts in training of the staff of Belarusian NGOs, concerning mechanisms of work of European programmes.

Probably, problems with donors and the presence of democratic mechanisms of influence in the EU countries will allow Belarusian NGOs to create a coalition on this question.

As for the activity of involving different NGOs in this process, there is a place for a number of actions, in particular:

- Information actions which should be done by our editions and web-sites, through our journalists and analysts.
- Carrying out of seminars, round tables, meetings with EU representatives.

- Invitation of NGO representatives to European institutions in order to present them European principles of work and to let them build connections.
- To support Belarusian NGOs' campaign on promotion of “the Belarusian problematics” in the EU countries.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

For more than ten years in Belarus, there have been programmes to develop civil society and to strengthen democracy – however, the situation with civil society and democracy is only getting worse. It is obvious that the transition programmes started after the Berlin Wall fell have stopped at the borders of Belarus; - they do not work any longer. Belarus is a problem, the problem of a European type and scale, and this problem cannot be solved by standard ways and typical programmes. This problem's resolution demands special and joint efforts of Belarusian civil society and Belarusian elite, European politicians and “programme designers”, as well as European civil society.

First of all, there is a need in efforts to develop and carry out an adequate and successful strategy, and then - a special program for its implementation. Nobody, except for the Belarusians themselves, can make it.

All that is required from EU partners (donor programmes and civil society partners), is to listen and to understand, and if there is such a purpose, to help those who ask for help in the fields where it is really needed, not substituting the Belarusian subject by themselves.

Therefore, the basic recommendation to the EU as a donor will be the requirement of high reflexivity, readiness to change their approaches and, most of all, involvement of the Belarusian side in the process of planning and coordination.

Today, we can recommend the EU to make the process of consultations more open, with feedback: what is accepted, what is not and why. To use for this purpose the available information resources - www.eurobelarus.info, New Europe, www.ngo.by, etc. - as communication platforms. To publish the basic documents of the EU policy there as well.

To expand a circle of Belarusian experts, politicians and NGOs involved in consultations, but in these, precisely differentiated qualities (an opinion of an organized target group and that of an expert should not be mixed up).

During consultations, a representative of civil society has to prove that he/she has the right to represent interests of his/her group; one is to distinguish between opinions of different target groups with different interests (NGO and GONGO, grassroots and service organizations, etc.)

To admit “participation of NGO representatives in meetings, consultations and round tables with participation of EU (EC) structures, other donor structures (in Minsk, Kyiv and Brussels). This participation has also to do with the stage of formation of politics, and the stages of monitoring and estimation”.

To use analytical and survey materials prepared by Belarusian experts and analysts.

Not to delegate management of programmes to re-granting structures of the neighbouring countries as it leads to the situation when Belarusian NGOs happen to be in the conditions of help receivers, but do not participate in its programming. “Intermediate” donors have their own purposes which are congruous with neither Belarusian actors’ tasks, nor with the programmes’ objectives. If there is a need for delegating and re-granting, it is better to create a separate fund or a programme with the participation of Belarusians in its management or supervision.

To monitor more promptly the situation in the state and to expand work with Belarusian analytical centres. Now, just to keep wide priorities in programmes distributed in Belarus and to speed up decision-making processes concerning projects - thus compensating for the sluggishness of European programmes' reaction to changes of the situation.

To protect actively the organizations carrying out EU-supported projects in the Belarusian political situation, in case of reprisals or unforeseen complications caused for internal political reasons.

The NGO National Office in Brussels can only have powers and trust if there is an inner-Belarusian coalition which would authorize this office in lobbying or promotional activities. In Brussels, there should be "ambassadors of civil society of Belarus" authorized by organizations from Belarus.

At the level of projects' implementation: not to set forth conditions which are only convenient for GONGOs; to consider a situation where Belarusian subjects are compelled to work through a partner, to be registered abroad and to find other ways of a legal performance of their activity. Programmes' conditions and frames, as well as projects' size, should be coordinated with Belarusian experts in the same way priorities should be coordinated with civil society and experts.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Prepared by Amra Seleskovic
VESTA Association

1. About the survey

Vesta Association from Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, translated the ITS questionnaire into Bosnian and distributed it to nongovernmental organizations. *For better coverage, the questionnaire was distributed by an email list of active networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Referent Groups, NGO of Council, nongovernmental organization portals www.ngo.ba and www.civilnodruštvo.ba.* Additionally, the ITS questionnaire was directly forwarded to several nongovernmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The answers were mostly opinions of organizations that for many years have been active in

establishing the dialogue between civil sector and governmental institutions. So as to complete the data from the questionnaires that had already arrived, Vesta Association used a Mapping Study of Non-State Actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, we had conversations with several experts in civil society of Bosnia and Herzegovina and used cooperation mechanisms with governmental institutions.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

Civil sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been trying for several years to prove its justification in building a democratic society and reconciliation. Numerous nongovernmental organizations had been founded after dedicating themselves to better respect for human rights. The complex political situation in this country significantly influenced the development of the civil society, so that today the sector is not strong enough. It is too uncoordinated and unconnected to initiate quality reform changes.

On 26 April 2007, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Agreement on Cooperation between the BH Council of Ministers and the BH Non-Governmental Sector. The agreement has practical and symbolic value, and it provides a framework to help direct governmental and non-governmental sectors at all levels of government in B&H, from local communities (municipalities) to state level. Regarding the fact that the Agreement is the result of several years of dedication by non-governmental organizations, gathered in the coalition To Work and Succeed together, whose notional creator is Center for Promotion of Civil Society Sarajevo, the Agreement is signed on behalf of the non-governmental sector in BH by the Chairman of this organization. By that, in a certain way, credit was given to organizations gathered in the coal-

tion and to the fact that the Agreement was initiated by the non-governmental sector. Basically, the Agreement is the expression of the need for the non-governmental organizations and the B&H Council of Ministers to build on institutional framework of mutual cooperation and a constructive dialogue. For that reason, the Council of Ministers announced opening of the Office for Cooperation with the Non-governmental Sector that will supervise the application of the Agreement. The Agreement specified the formation of the Civil Society Council that will supervise and assess the usage of the Agreement, as well as to encourage its usage on lower levels of government. On the other side, organizations that initiated this Agreement obliged themselves to form the Civil Society Board, the non-governmental sector advisory body of BH that will delegate some of their representatives in the Civil Society Council of the Council of Ministers.

The Civil Society Board was established in October 2007 and it consisted of 31 non-governmental organizations representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council of Ministers analyzed the new policy about the inside systematization of the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by which the decision about establishment of the Office for Cooperation with Non-governmental Sector at this Ministry was practically verified. In the following period, the Board will certainly monitor the realization of the decision about the establishment of the office that is about the Council for Non-governmental Sector at this office.

Our subjects had the following opinions about the relationship with the non-governmental institutions, that is with the Delegation of the European Commission to BH:

- The opinion about efficiency of the coalitions and networks was divided. None of the organizations evaluated the work of outgoing coalitions and networks as very “good”. At the same time,

the organizations think that networks are mostly led by organization leaders who often use such frameworks for the promotion of their own aims. While doing so they emphasize that the networks are mostly open, whilst in reality small organizations cannot come into the picture. The question is raised about their sustainability since many networks have been closed because of wrong perceptions about their real reason of existence. In particular, the surveyed organizations think that the interest for networking is of a financial nature, because the organizations believe that in that way they will be “closer to funds”. In such networking the motif for common action towards reform changes and the will for volunteer engagement for achieving higher goals, that they as individual organization cannot achieve, is missing. The surveyed organizations consider that there is much to be done in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the establishment of effective networks that can be a strong force of the civil society for changes. The surveyed organizations do not think of the establishment of coalitions as a necessary condition for effective cooperation with EU institutions and state mechanisms, but they think that it is necessary to build them since the voice of many organizations is more acknowledged. An office of non-governmental organizations in Brussels is seen as something uncertain and far off, but at the same time desirable. It is interesting that an organization mentioned the existing visa regime as a complicated circumstance for strengthening networks and coalitions in BH.

- Most respondents think that the civil society organizations’ capacity in the sense of cooperation with EU institutions (design, realization, EU policy monitoring) is “poor”. The opinion that prevails is that the organizations are preoccupied with their own problems and surviving and that for that reason they are not able to dedicate themselves to these topics that require expertise, awareness, time and resources. The organizations believe

that not enough is being invested into the process of civil sector capacity building so that it can recognize the importance of these topics and in that way contribute to the stabilization and association process. In that sense, the organizations support the training programs, that have to be a continuous practice, and especially those that allow mentorship of experienced EU organizations. Those surveyed think that it is desirable to acquire knowledge through training, study tours, etc.

- The general assessment is that donation programs are not in accordance with the real necessities of the society. The surveyed organizations indicate only the attempts of coordinated activities of the donors in Bosnia and Herzegovina that remained unsuccessful because of unclear developing policy and strategic positioning of the non-governmental sector. Donors, according to the subjects, very often choose their own priorities, which makes the non-governmental organizations that are struggling to survive, “donor driven”. For the improvement of the non-governmental organizations donor support, research of the users in BH is needed as well as strengthening of the dialogue and partnership of governmental and non-governmental sector through the Office for non-governmental organizations at the BH Council of Ministers. Additionally, the respondents believe that the donors should choose the strategic support of civil sector and avoid financing of short-term projects without the opportunity for effective impact on the community.
- The legal framework for the action of non-governmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina is satisfactory. However, on the other hand, there is the need to legally isolate the special significance organizations, to mark active organizations (since only registered ones can be counted and they do not do the activities), and to legally advance tax policy for non-governmental organizations. The subjects suggest too, through EU institu-

tions, to put pressure on governmental structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina so as to advance the legal framework for non-governmental organizations.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, consulting is a legal duty of Ministries and other institutions. On 07.09.2006, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Rules of Consultation in creating legislation, which practically enables the most significant participation of non-governmental in creating key documents in the country. However, as every rule has its exceptions, so this decision of the Council of Ministers, too, is rarely in practical use. We get the impression that the governmental institutions do not consider non-governmental to be a relevant participant of the changes, due to which the invitations on consultations are very often of a formal nature, published in the media, with a small number of circulation, lat, etc.

- None of the organizations that completed the questionnaire was consulted during the preparation of documents for the strategy extension, association and implementation of European partnership priorities and action plans. Because of the absence of responses in this section it is not possible to give a completely objective view of those surveyed. In a certain number of questionnaires, respondents note that they are interested in engagement in shaping EU foreign affairs. They want, through partnership with the government, to approach the EU together for the purpose of creating the policies that are appropriate to the real situation in the country. However, they see a difficulty in it that reflects itself in insufficient informing about the ways and mechanisms of integration of non-governmental organizations in creating policies. They add to it insufficient information of

NGOs and citizens, as well as of political situation in the country that makes the functioning of NGOs on EU foreign affairs monitoring difficult.

- In the second part that concerns the strategic and operative levels, we got several illustrative responses. The subjects state that in a certain number they were consulted during the EU support programming process (IPA, MIPD, etc.). the consultation process was organized by Center for Civil Society Promotion, that is, by the Directorate of European Integration (DEI), which were not of consulting nature. DEI had continuity in consulting for preparation of these strategic documents, however, that did not happen. In the final phase of MIPD, through mail, this strategy was sent by DEI, without the possibility of commenting. In November 2007, the Delegation of the European Commission organized the meeting with leading organizations of BH civil society, for the purpose of defining the form of cooperation of civil society with bearers of the decisions in IPA programming area. The Civil Society Board sent a letter to DEI in which it offers cooperation in 2008 IPA programming process and 2007 IPA implementation monitoring. However, it is found out that even this process went through without consulting the civil sector. The subjects hope to, at least, participate in 2009 IPA programming. This is very important, is very well familiar with the situations in BH and can assure the suggestions that reflect real needs of the country. On the other side, we should bear in mind that the civil sector does not have enough knowledge and information on the programming process. Regarding EU funds usage, the subjects say the procedure is too complex for young non-governmental organizations. The means necessary for their own participation, also, often exceed the abilities of non-governmental organizations. For that reason, because of complicated procedure, high requests and the time necessary for

planning in project writing, many small organizations withdraw from applying. According to the subjects' opinion, in a long term, this can influence the absorption possibilities of the country to use EU instruments in the stabilization and association process, and beyond. The subjects suggest continuous education in project writing, strategic partnership with other bigger organizations, etc.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

It is completely certain that the basic challenge for further development of the civil sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the establishment and taking hold of the Office for relations with non-governmental organizations, that is the Council for non-governmental organizations. The organizations expect a very productive and rich partnership with the governmental Office and they hope for a strategy for development of the the civil sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is additionally expected from the Office to support non-governmental organizations in the further process of stabilization and association, as well as to use the full capacities of the civil sector in that sense. Governmental-nongovernmental partnership will surely completely mark the future period.

The second, equally important challenge is directed towards the active participation in creating strategic documents on the road of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union. Non-governmental organizations will surely tend to have a more active role, and to suggest in a well argued manner the country's priorities in using accessible funds. It will be necessary to do monitoring of 2007 IPA and 2008 IPA enforcement. It is important to emphasize that non-governmental organizations in that sense expect complete support of the European Commission Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and an adequate pressure from their side to DEI.

However, the question must be raised how professionally developed for an active dialogue regarding the creation of EU foreign affairs and strategic documents such as IPA and MIPD are non-governmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina? Precisely the possibility for additional and continuous education about the European integrations process is a solution to such problem. The readiness of non-governmental organizations for cooperation and mentorship of EU-based organizations is the basis and the chance for the development of the productive dialogue and the influence on reform changes in the country. We shall not forget that “big” organizations that have enough information and possibilities should give to small, insufficiently developed organizations, a chance to acquire knowledge and skills applied for EU funds through partnership.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The recommendation for governmental institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- The Council of Ministers has to make the Office for the relations with non-governmental organizations and the Council for non-governmental organizations operative as soon as possible.
- The Office for relations with non-governmental organizations needs in a participative way to introduce the civil sector development strategy and to inform all non-governmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina about that.
- DEI needs to, in time and continuously, assure the civil society organizations participation in strategic documents such as IPA and MIPD planning and monitoring.
- It is extremely important that DEI enables a transparent access into realization of projects approved by the 2007 IPA.

- The creation of a quality legal framework and tax policy for the development of partner relations with non-governmental sector.

EU institutions should ensure:

- The possibilities for continuous informing and education of citizens about the stabilization and association process, as well as about the European Union itself.
- The possibilities for education about the EU institution cooperation mechanisms with umbrella organizations that have their offices in Brussels.
- The means that will enable partnership actions of non-governmental organizations with EU organizations what will additionally strengthen their capacities, with the result that civil society will be ready for the initiation of reform changes in BH.
- Education of government officials about the importance of partnership with non-governmental organizations and programs for the advancement of that cooperation.
- The possibilities of online consulting by which the communication between the Delegation of the European Commission and non-governmental organizations would be better.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries



**Prepared by Pavle Shramadei,
National Foundation for Civil Society Development**

1. About the Survey

The National Foundation for the Development of the Civil Society, in cooperation with the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) from Brussels, and with the technical support of the agency Target, ran a quantitative research project in March 2008 on civil society organizations (CSOs) entitled: “The implementation of the partnership principle in the EU neighbouring countries“.

The survey questionnaire was prepared on the basis of a template drawn up by ECAS, and the research was conducted simultaneously in the EU- neighbouring countries: Albania, Belgaurs, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

The data was collected by means of a questionnaire which was sent by e-mail to the addresses of a large number of active CSOs in the Republic of Croatia, and 96 CSOs returned the completed questionnaire by e-mail.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation

The survey results provided an important insight into the role which civil society organizations have in the creation, application and monitoring of the implementation of EU policies and programs in the Republic of Croatia and the implementation of the partnership principle.

- Most CSOs (76%) were founded after 1995. A majority of the CSOs have up to 5 employees (65.6%), and the areas of work of the CSOs which took part in the research are primarily human rights (27.1%), followed by social services (25%) and education (22.9%).
- CSOs are generally not consulted during the creation of strategic documents (86.5%). The ideas of these CSOs which are included in consultation are mainly taken into account and the consultation procedure is mainly in written form. As the greatest opportunity for participation in the shaping of EU external policy (strategic documents on enlargement, accession/European partnerships and action plans for application of the priorities of these partnerships etc.) CSOs mention knowledge of the needs in the area of the work of NGOs (29.2%) and as the greatest problem – insufficient information on the possibilities for participation (22.9%).

- Most CSOs (93.8%) are not included in monitoring EU external policy. As the greatest opportunity for monitoring EU external policy (enlargement, SAP, action plans etc) the CSOs again mention knowledge of the needs in the area of the work of CSOs (27.1%) and as the greatest problem again insufficient information on the opportunities to participate (25%)
- CSOs were generally not consulted (89.6%) during the creation of one of the external support programs of the EU such as the IPA MIPD (multi-annual indicative planning document), and IPA multi-annual and annual action programs. Of ten CSOs who were consulted, the ideas of five of them were taken into account.

Once again the greatest opportunity for inclusion in the programming of financial support by the EU for CSOs was given as knowledge of the needs in the field of work of CSOs (28.1%) and the same major problem was indicated – insufficient information on the opportunities to participate (22.9%).

It is worth mentioning that within the planning of the Phare 2006 *Enabling the Civil Society Sector for Active Contribution in the Pre-accession process* grant scheme, the civil society sector, through the Council for Civil Society development – an advisory and expert body of the Croatian Government, was actively involved in the defining of priority areas for financing and in the sectoral analyses. In addition, the sectoral analysis, problem identification and priority areas for financing were offered for a wide sector consultation through the website of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs (GOfNGOs).

Despite all efforts made by the GOfNGOs, which are in accordance with the best practices of civil society dialogue, to include the broader spectrum of CSOs in the process of planning the priorities

that will be financed in the scope of the IPA grant scheme (I component), the response of CSOs regarding this topic was not very big.

3. Opportunities and Challenges for dialogue

The mechanism for a successful dialogue in the creation of programming documents for IPA the GOfNGOs has set up in two levels:

- In order to reach the broader spectrum of CSOs, the GOfNGOs has included the Council for Civil Society Development in the creation of the key document for IPA programming: the sectoral analysis. This process was designed in two stages with two workshops. The first workshop was organised on 19 September 2007 with an introduction on general aspects regarding the first component of IPA, review of all previous priorities that were financed and detailed elaboration in the form of guidelines and the role of the Council members in this procedure. In the 3 weeks period they had the task to contact the broad spectrum of CSOs, which they are representing in order to collect the contribution to the process of planning. The second workshop - continuation of developing the sectoral analyse was held on 10 November 2007. The representatives of the civil society within the Council for Civil society development presented the inputs of the CSOs in several, most relevant areas. Based on these contributions three areas of priorities where defined as well as relevant activities within these areas;
- At the same time a call for contributions in developing the IPA priorities was posted on the GOfNGOs web site with two possibilities: to send the contributions by electronic mail or to contact the particular representative of the civil society within the Council for civil society development.

All identified areas through this dialogue were incorporated in the project documentation. The whole process was announced and followed by appropriate and detailed information on the GOfNGOs web site.

1. Operational Level – Implementation of EU Programs/ Projects

About 30% of CSOs make use of financial means from EU programs and projects such as: PHARE, CARDS and EIDHR instruments, community action programs etc.

The largest number of CSOs (56%) use small amounts of financial support (micro grant). Almost all CSOs (96.3%) believe that small and local CSOs should have equal access to EU funds, and the same number of CSOs believes that the opportunity should exist for sub-granting.

As the greatest opportunity for participation in the implementation of programs/projects, CSOs mention knowledge and skills for running projects well (25%), whilst 19.8% of CSOs give insufficient education as a problem. One of the major problems of CSOs is the complicated registration procedure (18.8%).

2. Strengthening the Partnership Relationship between the EU and neighborhood civil society

The average assessment of the quality of information from the EU is 2.43, from the national/regional/local level: 2.22 and from other sources 2.32 (on a scale of 1-4)

These results show that CSOs assess the quality of information (from all three sources) as satisfactory.

3. The main problems in receiving information on EU External Policies and Financial Support

CSOs mainly have easy access to relevant documents (59.4%), but documents are mainly not accessible in the phase of creation (82.3%) and are rarely accessible in Croatian language (74.7%).

4. The effectiveness of the European Commission in Croatia

CSOs are divided about whether the effectiveness of the European Commission Delegation in Croatia is bad (26%), satisfactory (36.5) or good (31.3%). A very small number of CSOs (5.2%) believe the effectiveness of the European Commission Delegation is very good.

5. Building coalitions

Almost half (47.9%) of CSO-representatives believe the level of influence of coalitions and networks on the process of decision-making on a national and EU level is unsatisfactory.

6. Assessment of the importance of building coalitions for successful interaction with EU institutions and national authorities

CSO-representatives mainly believe that building coalitions is important for interaction with EU and national authorities (84%), but they are divided over whether they should be part of an association on the EU level (54%) or have a Croatian representative office for civil society organizations in Brussels (45%).

A Community programme *Europe for Citizens*, newly opened to applicants from Croatia as to a first non-EU member country participating in the Programme, represents a range of possibilities of cooperation and interaction with the EU civil society organizations, networks, think-tanks and local and regional self-government units.

The very objective of the Programme is to foster collaboration and exchange of knowledge and know how between civil society representatives in the countries participating in the Programme (27 MS and Croatia).

Also, in the last 3 years, a total of 50 representatives of the most influential CSOs from all regions of Croatia and with different fields of activity participated in EU Information, Training and Scholarship Programme, held by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in co-operation with ECAS. The Programme intended to encourage more active participation of Croatian CSOs in the process of integration in the EU and to improve links with umbrella networks operating at the EU-level, and it included seminars, specialised workshops and a study visit to Brussels. After completing their 6-months education, all participants were required to pass on the knowledge and experience they have acquired in their own areas of activity.

7. Increasing the capacity of civil society organizations

CSO-representatives are divided about their attitude to the capacities of civil society organizations to be included in cooperation with the EU. Most representatives (60.4%) believe that EU programs do not emphasize building the capacity of CSOs enough.

8. Technical assistance (TAIEX and Twinning instruments)

CSOs believe that they should have technical assistance available, above all in the form of training (88.3%) and study trips (67%).

9. Enhancing donor coordination

The majority of CSOs (72%) believe that the lack of coordination of donors threatens the sustainable development of civil society in Croatia.

In that context, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs launched the initiative of civil society donor coordination, primarily on a national, but also on a regional level, in the light of the DECIM programme, launched by the European Commission and the World Bank, with the aim of facilitating donor coordination in the area of civil society development. Two DECIM Croatia consultative meetings have been held so far. The program supports the implementation of a Donor Exchange, Coordination and Information mechanism (DECIM), which is open to bilateral/multilateral donors and private foundations, and which will benefit a wide range of civil society organisations.

10. Recommendations by CSOs to speed up the development of the civil society

The proposals most frequently mentioned by CSOs are the following: encouraging partner cooperation of civil society organizations (19.8%), and better information and education for CSOs (18.8%).

11. Creating an enabling environment for civil society organizations

The present legal framework for civil society organizations was assessed as inappropriate in 55.2% answers, but at the same time as supportive of CSOs in 41.7%, whilst only a very small number felt it was a threat to CSOs (1%).

Most CSOs (66.7%) assessed that the Government is cooperative in the process of changing the current legal framework for CSOs.

It should be mentioned, as an example of good practice, the participation of civil society sector in drafting the National Anti - Corruption Strategy and its Action Plan. The key document within the priority area for Croatia's accession process (Chapter 23) recognizes the cooperation with civil society as one of the main principles in

implementing the National strategy, obliging all (public administration) bodies charged with the implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan to improve cooperation with civil society.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The inclusion of CSOs, from the smallest to the largest, in partnership on a local and national level, as well as on the level of the EU, is a challenge, which most CSOs who took part in the research consider to be key.
- The main difficulties in establishing partnership are: weak influence on the decision-making process, a lack of capacity and lack of interest from local authorities, uncertain sustainability of civil society organizations, the lack of adequately trained staff and complex administrative work.
- Opportunities to develop effective partnerships may be found from creating an encouraging environment and possessing adequate knowledge and experience on the part of civil society organizations, to building coalitions and strengthening cooperation with local, regional, and EU civil society organizations.
- Most organizations which took part in the research find the quality of information on EU foreign policy and financial support to be mainly good, whether the information comes from a national/regional or local level, or from the level of the EU itself, but at the same time they consider that the accessibility of draft strategies and other key documents before and during the process of consultation on their adoption is weak, and the inclusion of CSOs is insufficient.
- The recommendations for realization of a sustainable and active civil society may be summarized in the realization of effective and quality partnership with local authorities, further building of coalitions and the desired coordination of donors in an environment that encourages the development of civil society.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

KOSOVO



**Prepared by Fatmir Curri & Venera Hajrullahu
Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)**

1. About the survey

The ITS questionnaire was received from ECAS by mid April 2008 and distributed to members of the CIVIKOS Platform, the national platform of leading CSOs in the country and mailing list (around 250 addresses) and to a coordination group of the biggest Kosovo NGOs working in the field of European integration. Due to limited time for filling in the questionnaire, KCSF has called a meeting of leading NGOs covering various fields of European Integration. The first mailing was on 28 April. The deadline for return of the questionnaire was 2 weeks. Very limited number of filled-in

questionnaires was returned by the deadline. The replies were unsatisfactory both in terms of number and content.

For this reason, other sources needed to be consulted to make possible drafting of a country report that would present some general trends and the state of affairs. Therefore, in drafting the report the authors based their conclusions on the organizational experience of KCSF as well as additional analysis of EU and government documents available. In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with EC and CSO representatives in Kosovo.

The report elaborates the partnership and in particular the process of consultation undertaken in 2007 by the EC representatives in Kosovo with regard to the preparation of the 2007 EC Progress Report for Kosovo and ongoing consultation process on preparation of the 2008 EC Progress Report. The research methodology includes but is not restricted to desk review, face to face interviews, and qualitative analysis of the consultative mechanism used in the process of preparation of key documents governing EU – Kosovo relations.

The report puts an emphasis on EU and CSO efforts to consolidate their efforts and approaches toward participation in the EC consultative process on the elaboration of strategic documents related to European integration process.

This report has taken into consideration the fact that the European Commission Liaison Office to Prishtina (ECLO) was very small in 2007 with limited human resources. In addition, this year ECLO is going under heavy administrative and transition procedures for taking over the responsibilities on the operations and financial matters from the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR). The transition from EAR to ECLO has been planned to be concluded by 1 July 2008.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The European Commission has developed a Road Map on Enlargement, which is translated into Legislative and Work Programme for 2007 consisting of three important documents:

- Strategy paper on EU Enlargement
- Progress Report on Croatia, Turkey, FYROM, Montenegro, B&H, Serbia and Kosovo
- European Partnerships (Council Decisions) on Croatia, Turkey, FYROM, Albania, B&H, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

These documents present a framework through which the EC is able to screen and monitor the progress of Kosovo in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria. In order to prepare the Progress Report, the Commission has to ensure that the consultation process is inclusive and weighed against several EU principles. The key principles are emphasized in the Commission's White Paper on European Governance: participation, openness, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. These principles establish an assessment ground for this report.

The EC prepares its Progress Report for Kosovo since 2005. It is a general perception among non-state stakeholders that EC did not maintain an inclusive approach in line with the principle of open governance when preparing the 2007 Progress report. This might be a consequence of several factors i.e. lack of resources, non-structured administration and institutional setting within the EC.

The EC has invited local CSOs for a consultation meeting for the EC Progress Report in June 2007. The inputs from CSOs were *ad hoc* and not based on produced reports and analysis in their respective fields of work. According to interviewers, the perception was

that the ECLO was more interested “*to tick the box*” than the consultation meeting has taken place rather than seriously be able to listen, gather data and address the comments within draft Progress Report being prepared then.

There were no structured consultations organized with regard to the EU Enlargement Strategy and European Partnership for Kosovo. In connection to this, one meeting was held at ECLO premises in the first part of 2007 where the Kosovo NGOs were invited to comment and give their inputs and considerations based on the EC Progress Report of 2006. Several NGOs which were able to produce written comments were then invited to Brussels to discuss the issues with the Kosovo desk at DG Enlargement/EC.

Each year there is improvement in the partnership principles by the EC side. The consultation process regarding the EC 2008 Progress report is more sound and based on EC principles of good governance. This implies that the EC is more organized and consistent in inviting Kosovo Public Institutions and NGO’s for their contribution. A consultative meeting was organized with CSOs in Kosovo and they were given a chance to send in their comments and observations beforehand (i.e. before the 2008 Progress report is completed). However, the time was still limited and insufficient for local organisations to send their comments and concerns.

Interviewed organisations have unanimously responded positively regarding the 2008 consultation process. This positive mood reflects more on the timing and readiness of the EC to involve local partners; however more needs to be done especially in CSO’s qualitative involvement.

Although the process has not been totally non-inclusive, the invitation lists were very selective and provided only a limited number of active CSOs to participate in the discussion rounds organized by the ECLO representatives. Moreover, the invitation and extended

partnership from EC is based mainly on CSOs active at central level (Prishtina), those most active with activities and events. The consulted target groups were called randomly and based on the reputation and credibility they enjoy in the society, and apart from this there are no other criteria for their identification. It is a general perception that the EC did not allow enough, or a standard period of time for the collection of inputs and their processing.

This year, there is some improvement in the consultation process. Kosovo based NGOs, besides being able to attend one collective consultation meeting, have had a chance to send their comments in writing. In addition, ECLC website has launched information that comments and inputs could be collected in writing. Nevertheless, the deadline and short notice for input submission has discouraged many local organizations from sending their concerns and observations. Regardless of this, Kosovo wide NGOs need to be more proactive in order to benefit from the EC partnership and contribute in order to be able to represent their interests and advocate for their causes.

In general it is observed that EC failed in acknowledging the receipt of contributions from the interested parties. Most of the time, comments and inputs were based on personal beliefs of the editors working in Prishtina or Brussels. Very little data and statistics are provided from both national authorities but as well as from the NGOs. The single access point for comments is not known to local NGOs. Primarily, open public debates/seminar/conferences and press releases are used to acknowledge and listen to the voice of civil society. Individual project based meetings and contacts with EC officers are used to collect data and information from the ground and the concerns within respective fields of NGO work.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

Based on respondents' interview, in house knowledge and analysis of available documents the following opportunities and challenges for dialogue have been identified:

- Continues commitment and stronger willingness from the EC to seriously consult and involve Kosovo civil society in the design, preparation and implementation of key strategies and documents governing EU – Kosovo relations.
- Better communication and establishment of structured lines of cooperation and consultation mechanisms.
- Better exchange of *information* related to the EU agenda.
- Timely information of EU funding possibilities and translation of documents into local languages.
- Use of different *channels* for communication: mailing lists, regular meetings/consultations, information meetings, phone calls and alike.
- Possibility to work on sectorial fields and gather focus groups during execution of partnership principles.
- Increased capacities and sectorial skills among Kosovo NGOs
- Inclusion of NGOs as contributors to EU agenda with implementation, education and awareness raising and monitoring role.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

- There are now some formal mechanisms in place within EC Liaison Office to Kosovo and as a result, consultation with stakeholders can start being more structured and not random and on *ad hoc* basis, as they used to be until recently.
- EC shows readiness to involve local partners; however more needs to be done especially in CSO's qualitative involvement.

- Discussions with public institutions and local NGOs brought to light the need for better organisation of reporting mechanisms and internal structures within ECLO in order to improve the flow and processing of information.
- NGOs should be more organized and develop themselves in different sectors in order to respond to growing requirements in relation with the EC.
- Mandatory inclusion of representatives of civil society in the programming process and evaluation and monitoring bodies for IPA assistance.
- Establishment of mechanisms for regular and structured dialogue, namely EU institutions, national authorities and civil organizations.
- Improve access to EU programming and other documents and increase possibilities for capacity-building to engage in civil dialogue.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

MACEDONIA



**Prepared by Tanja Hafner Ademi
Macedonian Center for International Cooperation**

1. About the survey

The ITS questionnaire was translated to Macedonian and distributed to members of the Civic Platform for Macedonia (CPM), the national platform of leading CSOs in the country and mailing list (around 2000 addresses) and website of Civic World, a monthly civil society publication, published by MCIC. The first mailing was on 15th January. The deadline for return of the questionnaire was 1st March. Only three filled-in questionnaires were returned by the deadline. These were from: Center for Institutional Development (CIRa), Association of Women Organizations in Macedonia

(SOZM) and Journalists for children and women rights and protection of environment in Macedonia.

For this reason, other sources needed to be consulted to make possible drafting of a country report that would present some general trends and the state of affairs. Therefore, in drafting the report the author based her conclusions on the organizational experience of MCIC as well as additional analysis of EU and government documents available.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The state of cooperation between civil society and national government is as follows:

The respondents' answers confirmed the findings of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2005 report conclusions (p. 74-77) on the state and civil society relations. In terms of *autonomy*, the report finds that the freedom of association and autonomous action is guaranteed by the Constitution and generally is respected by the Government. The Government does not directly interfere or obstruct CSOs, but there are attempts to influence through communication, funding and media.

In terms of *cooperation and dialogue*, the practice so far shows that it is not institutionalized and that it was carried out depending on the personal convictions of the executive of the institution or was based on personal friendship. A step forward in establishing better communication and cooperation is the decision of the Government for establishing a Unit for Cooperation with NGOs and a Strategy for development of relations between the Government and civil society. Concrete cases of an established dialogue and cooperation occur during drafting laws or national strategies on certain issues, or in cases of emergency (humanitarian) activities. In the period from

2002 to 2005, 59 initiatives have been submitted by CSOs, 24 of which are regarding the preparation of national strategies, namely: the National Poverty Strategy (2002); the National Youth Strategy (2004); the National Strategy for Roma Population (2004); the National Report for the Existing Development (2002); the amendments to the Law on Social Welfare (2003) which contains provisions for providing services by CSOs; the amendments to the Law on Citizen Associations and Foundations, etc. The Sector for European Integration, which is present at every significant event organised by CSOs, as well as a part of the civil servants employed in the Ministry of Finances, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare also contributed to the improvement of communications.

Local level cooperation, that is to say cooperation between the local self-government and the CSOs, is considered to be at a higher level than the cooperation at a national level. The participants in regional stakeholder consultations in preparing the report in Prilep, Veles, Kumanovo, Štip, Gostivar and Skopje have often expressed their contentment from the understanding and cooperation with the representatives of the local self-government. According to the Directory of Civic Organisations only 10.7% out of major 858 organisations exchange information with the Government, 15.9% with the units of the local self-government, 12.1% with other institutions and none with the political parties. The parameters for communication with the said participants are similar.

In terms of *cooperation and support*, the general impression is that the state financing of CSOs is not very developed, nor does it show any strategic consistency with those relatively small funds that the state decides to use as a financial support for certain activities. This tendency, especially in the last few years due to the worsening economic situation in the country in combination with a number of

crises that have subsequently developed in its neighbourhood and, finally, on its territory in the year 2001, also reflects on the scope of the state financing which was already rather limited. The single most significant opportunity which the Macedonian CSOs have for acquiring funds from domestic sources appears once in a calendar year, when the state announces a public notice for that purpose. The amount intended for this purpose usually represents a small segment of the total state budget for that calendar year. According to the Government decision for financing associations of citizens and foundations for the year 2004, 15,000,000 MKD (244,000 EUR) are allocated to 80 organisations, the Trade Union Confederation of the Republic of Macedonia being the greatest recipient with 4,500,000 MKD (73,000 EUR).

As an additional domestic source for financing of CSOs there is the fund which exists within the national lottery and other games of chance, in which case the amount received is forwarded to the Association of Organisations of People with Disabilities and then distributed to seven organisations—members of the Association, as well as to the Red Cross and sports organisations. This financing is carried out through the Ministry of Finance, but first of all it is given the support by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, with a special Government decision. For the year 2004, 75,000,000 MKD (1,220,000 EUR) were allocated for this purpose. It is also a well-known fact that some of the ministries allocate a part of the budget for the support of CSOs. Namely, within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning there is a fund for the protection and promotion of the environment and nature, which supports environmental organisations. Also, the Agency of Youth and Sports has allocated 81,000,000 MKD (1,317,000 EUR) for the year 2005, intended for the support of projects of non-profit organisations. The new Law for Social Welfare also stipulates novelties in the way CSOs are being financed which opens up a possibility for a direct

agreement – financing for services of CSOs at local level. The main shortcoming of the allocation of state funds is the non-transparency of the process and the lack of clarity as to the criteria.

The CSOs also receive financial support from a part of the local self-government units. Bitola, Kavadarci, Prilep, Kumanovo and Veles are municipalities for which there is data about annually allocated funds. Both organisational and project activities of organisations are being supported. The municipalities make an effort to support as many local organisations as possible and these funds are often provided from the original revenues of local self-governments.

Civil society and the EC Delegation/EC state of cooperation:

Based on the questionnaires, the three respondents portray a different experience ranging from excellent to bad. The perception is that civil society is either a mere decoration or that it is being misused for personal or particular interests of individual organizations. None of the organizations have been involved in developing of strategic documents such as European Partnership or Stabilization and Association Partnership. One organization (CIRa) was involved in the EC preparatory meeting for the up-coming DG Enlargement conference on 17-18 April and on national level as *facilitator* (service provider) to the Government for development of required EU strategic national documents (e.g. NPAA). All agree that EC needs to invest further to building of capacities of civil society and exchange between EU and Macedonia (TAIEX programme).

In order to illustrate the ways and depth of engagement between the two sides, three case studies on involvement of civil society in EC programming for IPA are described below:

On 25th September 2006, 31 representatives of civil society in Macedonia have been invited to the consultation on IPA Multi-Annual Indicative Programming Document (MIPD) 2007-9 for Macedonia. The invitation included the draft of the MIPD docu-

ment. Written comments were invited and based on available information, 4 organizations/individuals (including MCIC) sent written comments in advance of the meeting. The meeting took place on 4th October, 2006. No minutes are available from the meeting. On 19th April 2007, 39 representatives of civil society in Macedonia have been invited to the consultation on IPA Operational Programme Component I (Transitional Assistance and Institution Building) 2007 for Macedonia-part II. The invitation included a draft OP 2007-part II to be presented at the meeting. The meeting took place on the 24th April, 2007 and lasted for approximately 2 hours. Around 30 representatives of civil society in Macedonia were present. The meeting was hosted by the Head of the EU Mission in Skopje Erwan Fouéré. The meeting included presentation of the OP 2007 by Joan Pearce, Head of Economic, Trade and European Integration Section. The meeting also included responsible persons in the Delegation of the EC, Mr. Nafi Sarachini and Ms. Jutta Bulling, Programme Manager, Civil Society and Social Inclusion, and Islam Jusufi, Task Manager, Programming and Quality Assurance, both EAR Skopje. After an address by the Mr. Fouéré and presentation by Ms. Pierce a discussion followed. Civil society representatives expressed their disappointment over the content of the OP 2007-part II, which did not envisage direct support to civil society organization. The response from the representatives of the EU institutions was that the civil society organization should expect direct support to their activities from IPA component 2 Cross-border cooperation.

Based on the draft Cross-border Programmes obtained from the Secretariat for European Affairs public consultation with other stakeholders has been part of the programming process for development of the Programmes. There is no specific reference to civil society organisation as these are broadly understood under the term 'other stakeholders'.

Document name	Consultation date & place	Participants & contents
IPA CBC Programme 2007-13 Republic of Macedonia-Republic of Albania	February-March 2007	Consultations with the main local stakeholders during the SWOT analysis process
	11 May, 2007 Kicevo, Macedonia	Workshop with the final beneficiaries and local stakeholders. Presentation of the draft CBC programme and discussion on the priorities and measures
IPA CBC Programme 2007 Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria	10 October, 2006 Skopje, Macedonia	Workshop on the elaboration of the SWOT analysis with the participation of stakeholders at regional and local level in Macedonia
	29 January, 2007, Sofia, Bulgaria	Workshop 2 under Ex-ante and SEA contract Workshop in IPA
IPA CBC Programme 2007-13 Greece-Republic of Macedonia	N/A, Kavadarci	Public consultation with presentation and discussion of the programme to potential beneficiaries

Additionally, as an APRODEV partner, MCIC was involved in the consultation on IPA Multi-beneficiary Programme 2007-13. The invitation for consultation was sent on 3rd October, 2006, including a special questionnaire to be answered. The deadline for comments was 12th October, 2006. Due to short notice, no special comments were presented. APRODEV presented its feedback to the EC.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

Based on respondents' answers and analysis of available documents the following opportunities and challenges for dialogue have been identified:

- Better exchange of *information* and cooperation related to the EU, especially funding in terms of access to more information, information in local language and that this is timely (calls, consultation etc.)
- Use of different *channels* for communication: mailing lists, meetings/consultation outside of capital, information meetings for calls etc.
- Better networking, including related to EU associations and networks
- Possibility for CSOs as facilitators and monitoring of the process (as service providers).

4. Conclusions and recommendations

- Mandatory inclusion of representative civil society into the programming process and evaluation/monitoring bodies for all IPA Components
- Establishment of mechanisms for regular and structured tria-
logue (civil society-EU institutions-national institutions) which are transparent and operational
- Improve access to EU programming and other documents and increase possibilities for capacity-building to engage in tria-
logue/civil dialogue.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

MOLDOVA



Prepared by Arina Kraijdan Association for European Training and Information

1. About the survey

This report is based on the data of the ECAS ITS questionnaire (assessing the implementation of the partnership principle in the EU neighbouring countries)³⁹, analysis of elaborated reports on ENP, EUMAP implementation in Moldova and studies about EU-Moldova relations elaborated by different NGO's (ADEPT, Expert-

³⁹ For more information about ECAS ITS advocacy process, consult <http://www.ecas.org/product/91/default.aspx?id=644>

Grup⁴⁰), independent experts⁴¹, government structures reports on EUMAP implementation and publications from the governmental information Bulletin⁴², EU institutions communications, strategies, opinions and reports⁴³. Also were used materials from meetings, conferences, seminars organised by the AETI in Moldova in the period from 2005 till now related to this report in cooperation with ECAS and ECAS publications⁴⁴.

The aim of the ITS questionnaire⁴⁵ was to gather key information from CSOs working in Moldova on the implementation of the partnership principle, pointing out shortcomings and obstacles occurring at the EU and national levels and to assess the role that civil society in the EU neighboring countries plays in shaping, implementing and monitoring EU policies and programmes.

⁴⁰ Euromonitor, 2007 <http://expert-grup.org/?p=19&lang=en>

⁴¹ Civil society for European Moldova, <http://www.europa.md/upload/File/boxedreapta/EUROFO-RUM-CONSORTIUM.doc>; De la implementarea PAUEM la elaborarea de politici (From the EUMAP implementation towards the Policy Implementation), Chisinau, Cartier, 2006; Gundars Ostrovskis, Relatiile UE-Moldova: Rolul Parlamentului Republicii Moldova (Relations UE-RM: the role of the Republic of Moldova Parliament), 2006 http://www.undp.md/publications/doc/mission%20reports/Relatiile%20RM-UE_Rolul%20Parlamentului.pdf; Sergiu Buscaneanu, How Far is the European Neighborhood Policy a Substantial Offer for Moldova, Leeds, 2006 <http://www.e-democracy.md/files/enp-moldova.pdf>; Care este rolul societatii civile in implementarea Planului de Actiuni (What is the Role of Civil Society in the Action Plan Implementation) in *Palnul de Actiuni Uniunea Europeana - Republica Moldova*, Ghid, Chisinau, 2006, p. 39.; Igor Botan, E.U. – Republic of Moldova Action Plan turns 3, <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/commments/political/20080229/>

⁴² see the governmental reports on PAUEM implementation on www.mfa.gov.md; Buletinul informativ al Guvernului Republicii Moldova (2007, 2008) www.gov.md.

⁴³ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, COM(2006)726 final, Brussels, December 2006; ENP Progress Report, Moldova, COM(2006)726 final, SEC 2006 1506/2, December, 2006; Communication from the Commission A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy COM (2007) 774 final, Brussels, December 2007; EESC Opinion, The EU's Relations with Moldova: What role for organized civil society? Brussels, December, 2007 CESE 1714/07.

⁴⁴ Report on the Conference European Union and the Civil Society in Republic of Moldova (June 2006); Materials of the project "Strengthening civil society in Moldova" 2006-2007; Guide to EU Associations, Chisinau, 2007

⁴⁵ See the questionnaire on www.eustrainers-moldova.org

The questionnaire was delivered to more than 100 Moldovan CSO's. These included organizations that received EU support for their activities and projects, a number of organisations actively involved in monitoring of EUMAP, organisations which signed the memorandum of cooperation with MFAEI on EU integration, a great number of youth and human rights organisations, and organisations dealing with EU issues. The questionnaire was translated in Romanian and all of them were asked to answer the English or Romanian version. In the period from December 2007 until March 2008 10% of responses were received - 3 from the regional organisations (located in Criuleni, Dubăsari, Cahul), 7 from Chisinau (capital) located organisations, 1 of them an umbrella organisation representing more than 30 national and local NGO's.

The report reflects the situation in the field from the last 3 years (2005-2008). This corresponds to the period of the EUMAP implementation in the Republic of Moldova.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

General legal framework for Civil Society activity in RM

Law on Public Association Nr.837 din 17.05.96

Law 178-XVI on amending the law on public associations 20.07.2007

80% of the ITS respondents found the legal framework in RM for civil society activities as "inadequate", underlining that the "legal framework permits the activity but is not favourable". "There are no adopted standards for the economic activity of NGO's, the procedure of obtaining the certificate of public utility is bureaucratic, and there is no defined the mechanism for NGO's selling services". One respondent considers the legal framework "as acceptable".

Civil Society and the Parliament

On December 29, 2005, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a [Resolution concerning the approval of the Concept of Cooperation between Parliament and Civil Society](#)⁴⁶.

Representatives of civil society have shown that the Bill amending the Law on Public Associations passed after the first reading in November 2006 contains many deficiencies and many impediments to registering associations and the activities of public associations in Moldova and that is necessary to ensure the genuine involvement of civil society in amending legislation that directly affects its activities⁴⁷. Also representatives of civil society address to the Parliament an open letter⁴⁸ in which they indicate the restrictive and inadequate character for NGO development of the amendments to the Law on Public Association 1996.

The law 178 XVI was adopted in 2007 taking into consideration a small number of recommendations of CSO's ⁴⁹.

In March 2007 the Euroforum Consortium (consists at that time of 13 CSO's) in the report regarding PAUEM implementation indicate:

“Many mechanisms stipulated by the Concept regarding cooperation between Parliament and civil society have not been established including the following: councils of experts for Parliament's standing commissions; public hearings for each standing commission at least

46 Concept of Cooperation between Parliament and the Civil Society [http://www.parlament.md/download/news/civilsociety/Cooperation%20with%20civil%20society.%20Concept%20\(english\).doc](http://www.parlament.md/download/news/civilsociety/Cooperation%20with%20civil%20society.%20Concept%20(english).doc)

47 Civil society for European Moldova, 2007 <http://www.europa.md/upload/File/boxedreapta/EU-ROFORUM-CONSORTIUM.doc>

48 Apelul deschis catre conducerea Parlamentului din partea organizatiilor obstesti-http://www.europa.md/rom/sbmes/109

⁴⁹ See.

once a year; disclosures of contributions; publicising decisions on accepting or rejecting (in full or partially) contributions including the rationale for the decision and formulating and conveying answers to questions on contributions to their authors by the time the commission reports on draft legislation”⁵⁰.

In 2008 describing the mechanisms of cooperation with governmental structures ITSQ respondents comment: “At the national level there is a mechanism developed during a process of consultation between the Parliament of Moldova and civil society, which, at least theoretically is good enough and allows CSOs to influence the policy making process; the framework is simple: all draft laws are to be published on the Parliament’s site, CSOs propose comments and recommendations, the Parliament either accept them, or explains why the recommendations are not accepted; you can find its description on the Parliament’s site. Unfortunately the Parliament does not respect always its own obligation to consult civil society before voting a draft law. Nevertheless there are good examples in this story. The collaboration with the executive is not so good”.

In 2007 the European Information Centre of the Committee for the External Policy and European Integration of the Parliament of Republic of Moldova was opened “to provide the Parliament Members and the wider public with politically impartial information about the EU and Moldovan-EU affairs”⁵¹.

Now the Centre is in the process of elaborating a National Strategy for Civil Society Development for 2008-2011. The address for suggestions is indicated on the Parliament site⁵².

⁵⁰ Civil society for European Moldova, 2007 <http://www.europa.md/upload/File/boxedreapta/EU-ROFORUM-CONSORTIUM.doc>

⁵¹ <http://www.euroinfo.md/about>

⁵² <http://www.parlament.md/news/civilsociety/en.html>

Civil Society and the Government

The Government elaborated in 2005 the National Program for PAUEM implementation. The MFAEI was appointed as central National institution responsible for PAUEM implementation and monitoring. In August 2004 four inter-ministerial commissions were established. The reports on the PAUEM implementation have been published on the MFAEI site⁵³ from 2006. The first governmental reports presented a great number of activities without critical analysis and explanations of underlying problems. After the critical European Commission report (4 December 2006)⁵⁴ concerning the achievements in PAUEM implementation the reports became more concrete showing not only the activities of the public authorities but also CSO's involvement.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration invites periodically representatives of CSOs, to exchange ideas, views on aspects of Moldova's foreign policy, as well as on European policy of Moldova's Government.

In 2006 MFAEI signed the Memorandum of Cooperation in European integration with 22 NGO's⁵⁵.

In November 2007 Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child signed a memorandum for cooperation with a Network of NGOs from the social field.

One the one hand, the signing of the memorandums of cooperation between different governmental structures and CSO's is a mechanism that can be used for partnership cooperation in different

⁵³ www.mfa.gov.md; <http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/european-integration-documents/RaportRM-UE2007shortEN.doc>

⁵⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighborhood Policy, ENP Progress Report, Moldova, COM(2006)726 final, SEC 2006 1506/2, December, 2006;

⁵⁵ <http://www.mfa.md/img/docs/memorandum-privind-cooperarea-in-procesului-integrarii-euro-pene.pdf>

activities. On the other it is necessary over time to see if these memorandums are working and do not remain declaratory documents without any concrete results.

The ITS Q respondents comments that the cooperation between governmental structures and CSO's remain "Insignificantly, formal cooperation without real actions" and suggest "to develop an efficient NGO-funding support mechanism, whether through creation of a pool of independent funds to support NGOs or to develop a direct funding mechanism by opening access for NGOs to public funds".

One of the representatives of civil society indicates in response to the questionnaire, that the main difficulty for his organisation to be involved into shaping EU external policy is the "Government's attitude toward the non-governmental sector. See the declaration of the Prime-Minister in October 2007 in which he condemns the NGO's for generating a bad image of the country abroad". The reports by civil society relating to the different aspects of the development of Moldovan society addressed to the international organisations and different from the governmental reports are characterized by officials as discrediting the image of the republic. This fact makes it evident that the mechanism for real cooperation between civil society and government is not well understood⁵⁶.

On the other hand, as a reaction to the negative appreciation of governmental cooperation with civil society in PAUEM implementation, there appears in the last quarter of 2007 the Reports of the central authorities' cooperation with civil society on the MFAEI site. The reports are the list of all seminars, conferences and other activities organized by different international organizations and local NGO's with the participation of different Ministries. The reports are

⁵⁶ See Euromonitor 4 (9) 2007, p. 11-12 <http://expert-grup.org/docs/euromonitor09.pdf>

not analytical but present a sort of transparency and show examples of how NGO's can participate in PAUEM implementation.

Civil Society and EC Delegation

The European Commission Delegation was opened in Moldova in 2005. The staff is limited. The EC Delegation site⁵⁷ contains all EU programmes opened for Moldova.

ITS Questionnaire respondents characterized the EC Delegation effectiveness in facilitating communication between the EU and civil society as poor 90% and 10% as "fair". From the site it is not clear who is the person responsible for communication with civil society representatives.

Civil society as partner for EN Policy drafting, implementation and monitoring

The PAUEM negotiation was undertaken by governmental structures without participation of CSO's.

Only 2 respondents to the questionnaire indicate that they were consulted during the drafting of EUMAP, one unofficially and the second at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be a member of the National Team for negotiation.

In April 2005 the Institute for the Public Policies presented a European Strategy for Moldova elaborated previously and also implemented a programme of seminars addressed to the central authorities⁵⁸.

In 2006 ADEPT in cooperation with Expert –Grup elaborated and published an "EUMAP Guide" in Russian and Romanian. The guide contains also information on the EU-RM cooperation legal

⁵⁷ <http://www.delmda.ec.europa.eu/>

⁵⁸ See the Strategy and the seminar programs on the www.ipp.md.

frame, the description of ENP and the special chapter related to the civil society role in implementation of the Plan.

Mostly NGO's established in Chisinau were involved in monitoring of the EUMAP.

ADEPT and Expert-Grup publish from 2006 the Quarterly report "Euromonitor"⁵⁹ underlining the progresses and problems in the main fields of EUMAP.

In 2006 a group of independent experts cooperated in the Euroforum framework and analysed the process of reform of Moldovan society and published their studies on the Euroforum page on www.europa.md and in a book "From the EUMAP implementation towards the policy designing"⁶⁰. After 2 years of PAUEM implementation, in 2007, the Euroforum Consortium, supported by the European Initiative Program of the Soros Foundation, published an independent report "Civil society for European Moldova"⁶¹ designed and signed by thirteen representatives of different NGO's. This report pointed out areas in the implementation of the Action Plan that must be improved - democracy, rule of law, judicial reform, eliminating corruption, protecting fundamental rights and economic reforms and development. Experts made a number of recommendations on how to improve the situation.

Different Moldovan NGO's, supported by the European CSO's or international organizations implemented information activities about ENP and EUMAP addressed to their colleagues from CSO's and to the central and local public authorities. AETI organised in cooperation with ECAS in Chisinau an international conference

⁵⁹ All reports can be consulted on <http://expert-grup.org/?p=19&lang=en>

⁶⁰ De la implementarea PAUEM la elaborarea de politici (From the EUMAP implementation towards the Policy Implementation), Chisinau, Cartier, 2006

⁶¹ Civil society for European Moldova, 2007 <http://www.europa.md/upload/File/boxedreapta/EUROFORUM-CONSORTIUM.doc>

“EU and Civil Society in Moldova” (june 2006) and a seminar for NGO leaders on “Partnership building and networking” (28-29 March 2007).

MFAEI elaborated in cooperation with a civil society consultative group and supported by UNDP the Strategy of Communication in Moldova’s European Integration⁶². In 2007 in cooperation with MFAEI were opened 2 Pro-European Centres based on the NGO Resource Centres in Balti and Cahul in the North and South of the republic. For the last 3 months of 2007 the Reports on cooperation of the central public authorities with civil society were published on the MFAEI site⁶³. These reports show that Ministries cooperate mostly with NGO’s which are supported in their activities by different international organisations

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Andrei Stratan, stressed that the objectives of European integration and PAUEM implementation consolidated Moldovan society⁶⁴.

The main Achievements of PAUEM implementation in Moldova⁶⁵: opening the EC Delegation in Chisinau; Appointment of EU representative to Chisinau, EU BAM functioning, Continuous Judiciary system reforming; GTS+system and trade preferences for Moldovan products; the Common Visa Centre opened in Chisinau depends mainly on the on the effective interaction between EU and national governmental structures.

⁶² **Moldovan Foreign Ministry officially launches strategy of communication on Moldova’s European integration** <http://www.moldova.md/en/news/1211/1/2683>

⁶³ See for example Raport privind cooperarea autoritatilor publice centrale si organizatiile societatii civile, December 2007, on <http://www.mfa.gov.md/img/european-integration-documents/RaportSC122008.doc>

⁶⁴ Stratan Andrei, Obiectivele de integrare Europeana consolideaza societatea, Buletin informativ al Guvernului Moldovei, Nr. 11, 2007, p.1-7

⁶⁵ These achievements are recognized by the European Commission, by the Moldovan Government and by the Moldovan CSO’s

But the reforming of society in accordance with European values of democracy and market economy, the real stability and growth – the main objective of ENP cannot be achieved without effective cooperation with civil society.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

In the period from 2005 to 2008 changes not only to the situation in the republic of Moldova, but also EU structures express their position more clearly not only on ENP but also towards the role of civil society for the successful implementation of this policy.⁶⁶

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument⁶⁷ puts the NGO's and other CSO's in the list of eligible bodies for funding.

In this respect Moldovan CSO's have more opportunities to participate as a partner in ENP implementation. On the other hand, respondents to the questionnaire underline the lack of capacity to apply to EU funds, because of very sophisticated rules.

In 2005 there existed only few information points on the EU. – The European Documentation Centre supported by TACIS programme in the Government building and CEI at the Chamber of Commerce. Now there are more information structures for the governmental, for the general public and CSOs. These are the Parliament European Information Centre, Pro-European Centres in Balti and Cahul, European Information Centres at ASEM and University “Perspectiva-INT” in Chisinau. But these are not enough to supple-

⁶⁶ To be seen p. 33 of the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, COM(2006)726 final, Brussels, December 2006 p. 7 and point 4.3 from the Communication from the Commission A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy COM (2007) 774 final, Brussels, December 2007;p.11.

⁶⁷ See article 14 chapter Eligibility, point h in Regulation (EC) No1638/2006 on the European Parliament and The council laying down general provisions establishing ENPI, 24 October 2006

ment the information gap in the regions. The internet sources remain the main informational sources for regional and local NGO's.

Local Moldovan NGOs have very limited access to the internet sources and no information about donor offers and EU programs and projects.

Respondents indicate that is necessary to have more specific information for CSOs on the EU Delegation site in Romanian and Russian, the main languages of communication in the Republic of Moldova.

The common visa Centre and the new visa procedure facilitate the European mobility of CSO's leaders and members. But the financial possibilities of the national NGO's are limited and do not provide the possibility to participate in international events. All respondents to the questionnaire support the need to extend the TAIEX and Twinning Programs for CSO's.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Civil society representatives in Moldova were not involved in the process of PAUEM drafting and this fact generated the problems of effective involvement of civil society in the PAUEM implementation.

The precondition for effective ENP implementation is the cooperation between EU structures, national governmental authorities and all national stakeholders including CSO's. The main achievements of UEMAP implementation were based mainly on political decisions.

The ENP and PAUEM implementation stimulated Governmental structures to think about the necessity of cooperation with civil society representatives.

Civil society reports on PAUEM implementation attract the attention of Governmental structures to the problems of reforming society and stimulate problem solving.

Organised CS actions and consortium creation make the civil society voice more heard by governmental structures.

Beside the success achieved in the EUMAP implementation many problems remain to be solved.

Recommendations for civil society partners

- To create field networks to strengthen the activities performance and impact on governmental structures.
- To be more pro-active and not to wait the initiative “from above”. To try to be more informed, to solicit the information and opportunities, to “push” authorities to form the consultative structures and to cooperate.
- To elaborate alternative reports in their field of activities.
- To make their activities more visible publishing the different project results.
- To improve their capacities of communication and cooperation with EU partners.

Recommendations for Government

From ITS Q

Euroforum Consortium Report suggests the following actions for effective cooperation with civil society:

- strengthening cooperation with Parliament, government agencies, the President and central and local authorities through legislation by introducing amendments to the Regulation of Parliament, the Law on Government, the Regulation of Gov-

ernment and the Law on Local Public Administration among others

- promoting and adhering to the law on transparency in decision making and strengthening the communication capabilities of state institutions beyond formally adopting strategies⁶⁸.

ITS Q respondent's suggestions:

- To elaborate a clear consultative mechanism (public consultations, round tables, large working groups) between central and local authorities and civil society organisations.
- To make this mechanism transparent and known by NGO's placing the information on the web-sites with proper alerts in advance.
- To create working groups by topics, not on ad hoc basis, when it is needed for "reporting" purposes
- Select CSOs to participate in consultative groups on competitive basis
- To try to find out how is the consultation process is organised in other countries, where it works
- To support financially the NGO's activities in social field

For EU

- "The neighbouring states should be encouraged to reform politically and economically. At the same time the EU should also continuously develop the capacity to assess the genuineness of such efforts; otherwise the motivation to honour commitments in the Plan will remain low thus undermining a goal support-

⁶⁸ Civil society for European Moldova, <http://www.europa.md/upload/File/boxedreapta/EUROFORUM-CONSORTIUM.doc>

ed by the absolute majority of Moldovan citizens and wasting the money of European taxpayers. The European Commission should be more inventive and realistic in monitoring the actions of the Moldovan government while at the same time encouraging authentic reforms. This can be achieved through various mechanisms for establishing regular consultations with Moldovan civil society and also by making financial assistance conditional on progress in democratic and judicial reforms”⁶⁹.

- To give to the EC Delegation to Moldova more competences and to strengthen its capacity to consult and to work with CSO’s
- To develop a mechanism of small granting to support local NGO projects support.
- To support programs for NGO capacity development.

⁶⁹ Civil society for European Moldova, <http://www.europa.md/upload/File/boxedreapta/EUROFORUM-CONSORTIUM.doc>

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

MONTENEGRO



Prepared by Daliborka Uljarevic
Centre for Civic Education

1. About the survey

The survey has been conducted on a representative sample of 21 NGOs from Montenegro, covering different fields of expertise. This included NGOs which focus on providing support to development of non-governmental organisations in Montenegro, working on gender issues, environmental issues, human rights and minority rights, democracy, rule of law, education, research, youth mobilisation issues, local development, European integrations, etc. In addition to this, the regional aspect has been taken into the account and

consequently, NGOs from the central, southern and northern parts of Montenegro have been included.

Beside the differences in the fields of expertise, the NGOs encompassed by the survey have rather diverse levels of organisational structure, decision making procedures and capacities in general.

The main instrument used throughout the survey was ITS questionnaire. This has been a rather time consuming and demanding process, since this type of the questionnaire was somewhat challenging for the organisations. In addition to this, there were several interviews which enabled more detailed information to be obtained. Relevant documents and developments in the period of research have been noted and included in the findings and recommendations.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The level of the current state of cooperation between civil society and national governments and between civil society and EC delegation/EC is limited. The reasons for this are diverse, but the information gap surely represents one of them, as well as lack of genuine political will.

Most of the CSOs find that the quality of information on external policies of EU and financial assistance from the EU level is between “Good” and “Fair”. The situation is mainly the same with the quality of information on the national level. Also, most of the information is collected by organisations themselves through the internet, publications, bulletins published by national and international organisations and informal meetings with counterparts and interlocutors from the region and EU. Examinees claim that strategic documents regarding EU external policies and financial assistance are not available and understandable for them, because they are not translated in their language. Furthermore, CSOs are not involved in the

early stage of creating strategic and programme documents when the most important guidelines are outlined.

The effectiveness of the EU Delegation in Montenegro in facilitating communication between the EU and Montenegrin civil society is mostly evaluated as being “Poor”. Communication is to a great extent conducted through informal and sporadic meetings. However, one should note that the EC Delegation until November 2007 functioned with literally one person. Communication and cooperation with the European Agency for Reconstruction office is also generally evaluated as “Poor” and a lot of hope is expressed for the EC Delegation in terms of change of this situation.

In improving the consultation process, the following methods are used by the CSOs: round tables, working groups, monitoring of the work of the Government, personal initiatives in proposing specific solutions, making initiatives for consultation meetings, creating comments and drafts for some documents and laws, etc, as a manner of inclusion in policy making processes on the national level. Certain NGOs have developed communication with different stakeholders in Brussels.

In order to obtain regular and structured consultation with EU institutions and its representatives as well as with national authorities, CSOs suggest more intensive communication and consultation during the process of drafting policies and documents aimed for Montenegro, stronger efforts in translation of EU documents in order to make them available to all stakeholders, direct communication with Brussels, enhanced communication with the EC Delegation, and transparency in the process of drafting of relevant documents. CSOs stated that so far the communication from EU level, as well as from the level of national authorities, is mainly unilateral and it does not include CSOs in the process of creating important documents and policies.

When it comes to capacity, most of the NGOs stressed that CSOs do not have adequate capacities for cooperation with the EU and its institutions, both material capacities and human resources. Most of the NGOs are positive about the coalition building that would strengthen their positions and influence more efficient communication with the EU institutions and national authorities.

CSOs find that the EU does not pay enough attention to capacity building of CSOs, and in particular, it does not pay enough attention to surveying of the real needs for development of CSOs. This is most obvious in allocation of financial resources for trainings in areas that are not priorities or which are already covered with appropriate material. In this way, financial resources are being wasted without visible results and the existing needs remain without proper response. The general evaluation is that the cooperation between the EU and CSOs in Montenegro remains superficial and without clearly defined aims.

Examinees think that the technical assistance such as TAIEX and Twinning instruments should also be made available for CSOs, especially in facilitating study visits, possibilities of consultations with EU experts, trainings for project management and for application for EU funds, better information flow and accessibility of information, more support from the EU donors in providing better technical conditions for the work of CSOs, etc.

Concerning donor coordination and its improvement, CSO representatives find that donors do not pay enough attention to surveying of needs for development of CSOs and of society in whole. Project priorities are defined by donors and not by needs of the society and consequently the organisations are often forced to be donor driven instead of responsive to societal needs. In addition to this, certain areas are constantly in focus, whereas the others remain without any support. CSO consider that most of the leading donors establish

their funding strategies without thorough needs assessment in Montenegrin society or needs of the particular target groups.

Overlapping of projects frequently occurs, because donors have not made appropriate analyses of the situation in terms of who is already doing what to respond to certain issues, which leads to the examples in which certain organisations implement projects that are already partially or fully implemented by the state or some other organisations. In this way, lack of donor coordination results in fragmentation and wasteful duplication of efforts.

A great number of organisations find that the forms for application for EU funds are too complex; Processes as of monitoring are also too complicated which makes it almost impossible for organisations that have a lack of developed capacities to apply for EU funds. An additional challenge is that it takes a lot of time from writing application to the eventual implementation.

In CSO's opinion donors from EU should have a better understanding of situation in Montenegrin society if they want to determine projects' priorities according to the real needs of the OCD and society as a whole.

Acceleration of development of Montenegrin society can be accomplished not simply by giving money, but by objective monitoring of realisation of the projects conducted by organisations that have received grants. This would accelerate the development of CSOs and improve their credibility and reputation in society.

When it comes to the NGO legal environment, respondents consider that the current legislative framework that regulates the founding and functioning of NGOs in Montenegro is not accurate enough. Some organisations think that it should be changed. In most of the provisions, beginning with the definition of NGOs, the Law on NGOs is inexplicit and unclear.

The biggest problem for the smooth functioning of NGOs is the poorly defined method for financing their work. There are no transparent and accountable procedures for allocation of financial resources from the public funds.

Several organisations find that it is good that the Law on NGOs is a liberal one, but at the same time, most of them are concerned about the absence of the rule of law in Montenegro, which makes efforts of NGOs' toward improvement of particular laws meaningless. In general, the evaluation of legislative framework is "Inadequate" more than "NGO friendly".

Most of the CSOs believe that EU should pay more attention to the relation between government and the civil sector and that the level of their cooperation should be one of the most important indicators for democratisation of Montenegrin society and its progress towards EU.

The Montenegrin Law on NGOs should remain liberal regarding financing of NGOs, but it should also provide tools for monitoring and evaluation of activities of NGOs, which would help building those organisations that truly work and contribute to the development of this society.

When it comes to the level of policy dialogue, most of the NGOs were not consulted during the drafting of documents such as: Enlargement Strategy Papers, Accession/European Partnerships and Action plans for implementation of the priorities of these partnerships. Most of them do not know if any other organisation has been included in this process.

The possibility for CSOs inclusion in shaping EU external policies rests in those areas in which these organisations have years' long experience, such as understanding of certain European standards regarding CSO's working area and motivation and knowledge of its representatives. On the other hand, CSOs identify lack of developed

capacities in material and human resources as one of the greatest obstacles that prevents CSOs from more active participation in shaping EU external policies.

Respondents emphasise poor communication with governmental authorities responsible for cooperation with EU. These authorities do not share information with civil society about its present and future activities regarding cooperation with EU.

There is no clear picture on how to get involved in shaping EU external policies. Furthermore, most of the written materials and documents are not translated into the Montenegrin language which makes them inaccessible for a great number of stakeholders. Organisations which mainly consist of members of minorities in Montenegro also stress that important documents are not translated in their languages (precisely, the Albanian language) which hamper their active participation in the shaping of EU external policies.

Also, CSOs in Montenegro are not seriously involved in monitoring of Enlargement/SAP Action plan implementation.

They stress that even though monitoring of Enlargement/SAP Action plan implementation, for example, is one of their activities, the authorities – Montenegrin as well as EU representatives in Montenegro, are not interested in their results. CSOs find that the results of their monitoring are not considered in an adequate manner in developing important EU documents, such as the Progress Report.

The main opportunities of inclusion into monitoring of external EU policies are seen within the experience that CSOs have in monitoring, in the great number of people motivated to be part of that process, as well as in the developed network of contacts on the field that provides a good information resource. However, in order to be more actively included into monitoring process of the external policies CSOs need stronger support in capacity building and support in terms of the results of their work in monitoring.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

The greatest challenge for the EU and CSOs, on their way to establish substantial and intensive dialogue, is to make an additional effort towards mutual better understanding.

For the EU it implies stronger cooperation with Montenegrin civil society and more intensive communication which should result in better recognition of the real needs and priorities of CSOs and Montenegrin society as a whole.

At the same time, intensive communication can result in the creation of more objective assessment of the needs of Montenegrin society knowing that CSOs which work in the field are able to notice this more clearly.

On the other hand, the challenge for Montenegrin CSOs remains in substantial capacity building and this development represents the basis for stronger influence on policy making on the national and European level.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The most important conclusion is that CSOs in Montenegro are not included in a satisfactory manner in the process of shaping, implementing and monitoring of EU policies and programmes. This equally refers to the national and EU level. However, recent developments concerning the agreed signing of the Agreement of cooperation between the governmental Secretariat for European Integrations and NGOs could be an opportunity to start changes in this respect at the national level.

More political will would be needed from the national and EU level to include CSOs in the decision making process in an adequate manner.

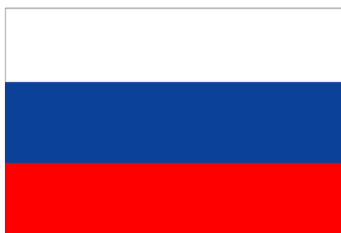
Donor coordination, transparency of funding procedures, timely and accurate information about available funds and frequent consultations with the NGOs concerning social priorities are crucially important for the future of Montenegrin CSOs.

It is a strong recommendation to have substantial and wide consultations with the CSOs in all phases of the respective process. These should acknowledge the capacities of the local non-governmental organisations and the level reached in their development. Moreover, continuous and regular communication with CSOs is necessary.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

RUSSIA



**Prepared by Konstatin Baranov
Young Europe**

1. About the survey

In Russia the survey was conducted by members of the working group “Defending Civil Society in the NIS” programme (comprising the representatives of such organizations as the International Youth Human Rights Movement, Moscow Helsinki Group, the “Young Europe” international network, etc.).

The ITS questionnaire has been translated into Russian in December 2007, and during January and February of 2008 it was circulated through a number of NGOs mailing lists and placed on major

Internet resources for civil society. The total number of NGOs representatives who received the questionnaire through those channels is over 1500 in general. Besides, letters with information on the survey and the questionnaire were sent personally to the leaders of about 50 most famous and experienced CSOs in Russia.

In addition the organizers contacted the EC Delegation to Russia (through its Press and Information department) and asked them to disseminate the questionnaire among their base of NGO contacts. But it turned out that the Delegation does not have a person responsible for contacts with NGOs, there are only managers of separate programmes such as EIDHR, IBPP and ECHO. Thus, there is no common base of NGO contacts and nearly no coordination between those programmes.

The survey organizers strived for achieving an equal representation of the organizations active in different fields: human rights defense, independent mass media support, social welfare, combating xenophobia and intolerance, education, policy think tanks, environment protection, local self-government, etc. – both nationally and locally.

Unfortunately, the survey did not appeal to a great number of NGOs. The organizers managed to collect 19 filled questionnaires, 9 of them by national-level organizations and 10 from local ones. 11 out of that number are human rights organizations, 3 youth organizations, 2 think tanks, 1 resource center for NGOs, 1 environmental organization, and 1 organization working in local self-government.

To ensure a better representation of facts official publications of the EC Delegation to Moscow have also been analyzed, as well as the monitoring reports on the situation of NGOs in Russia.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The current state of cooperation between civil society, the Russian government and the EC delegation to the country can be generally characterized as rather poor according to the findings of the questionnaire and other sources consulted.

Thus, more than a half of respondents pointed out that the effectiveness of the coalitions and networks from Russia in influencing the decision-making process at national and EU levels can be assessed as “poor” or “fair”. It is further commented that, on the one hand, the national government is not ready to hear the voice of the NGOs and their coalitions when making key decisions despite of the numerous efforts to influence this process. On the other hand, NGOs are not aware of the opportunities to somehow influence the decision-making at the EU level.

The coalitions themselves are often characterized as not very open and embracing mainly the large nation-wide NGOs. But their potential according to the respondents may be rather high, as coalitions give the opportunity to express the consolidated opinion, avoid duplication of efforts, etc.

The idea of joining a European-wide NGO association in order to increase the influence and involvement at EU level was taken rather enthusiastically by the majority of participating NGOs, whereas having an office or other permanent representation in Brussels was recognized as unrealistic due to lack of financial and other resources. One of the respondents noted that “usually NGOs are suspicious about somebody trying to present their voices and interest. So, particular attention should be paid to transparency and democratic procedures within such associations”.

At the same time, the Russian CSOs capacity to get involved with the EU is assessed as “good” by the majority of respondents,

though some point out that there is small interest in such involvement from both the EU and Russian CSOs. Besides, several respondents expressed the opinion that such involvement may be threatening to the CSOs: it will provoke attention of the authorities towards those organisations and the latter will suffer from extra control of their activities as nearly any interaction with foreign structures is now considered suspicious by the State.

The overwhelming majority of respondents think that EU programmes do not put enough emphasis on NGO capacity-building in Russia. It is generally explained by a poor access of local organisations to such programmes, lack of information and the language barrier. Many respondents note that in the current situation the project approach is not very effective in Russia and speak about the need for institutional support at least for those organisations which already received funding for their projects from the EU.

Almost all the participating NGOs consider that technical assistance should be available for the NGOs, though not a single respondent was aware of such instruments as TAIEX and Twinning before. Among the specific activities such as common training for Russian and European NGO representatives, study visits and other forms of exchange of experience, as well as information and institutional support were proposed.

Concerning the issue of donors' coordination and its role in the development of civil society, it was pointed out that such coordination is desirable but now it is far from being a key factor influencing the state of civil society in Russia. At the same time the effectiveness of funding can be raised. According to the respondents, the efforts of donors active in the country should be concentrated on institutional support, as now the NGOs' institutional stability is strongly dependent on the authorities (e.g. the organizations criticizing the government may be refused office rental, etc.), and support of awareness-

raising projects. It was also noticed that more attention should be paid to supporting new initiatives (not only long-established), and increasing the role of Russian experts in assessing project proposals according to their first-hand knowledge of the situation and needs of society. The assistance programs should be adjusted to the changes in Russian legislation in order that beneficiaries could avoid problems with taxation. The thematic priorities of funding should also be adjusted to the actual needs of the Russian civil society, not only the interests of donors themselves.

Nearly all the respondents described the current NGO legal framework in Russia as “threatening”. The amendments to several federal laws adopted at the end of 2005 substantially changed the legal status of NGOs in Russia. Research and monitoring conducted by different NGOs and international bodies demonstrate that the new legislation made the process of registering a new NGO too complicated. It granted the Federal Registration Service (a specially created governmental agency) the plenipotentiary power to exercise excessive control over the activities of the NGOs, introduced new reports, etc. As a result hundreds of NGOs were closed according to the new law, many other were fined or received a notice (two such notices received by an organisation may lead to its closure). Besides, the new legislation is freely interpreted by the executive bodies and is applied selectively. It lead to economic loss for the NGOs as now they have to spend much time and efforts to prepare reports to the FRS, documents for the inspections of their activity, etc., instead of conducting their day-to-day activities and rendering social services to their target groups. This legislation contradicts the international standards in the sphere of freedom of association.

One of the participating organisations – the International Youth Human Rights Movement – has been itself affected by the above-mentioned amendments. On June 13, 2007 the Sovetskiy dis-

trict court in Nizhniy Novgorod ruled on a claim by the Nizhniy Novgorod Region FRS that the International Youth Human Rights Movement (YHRM) had terminated its activities as a legal entity and, therefore, should be excluded from the State Register. The organisation's representatives learnt about the hearing by chance on July 30, and received the court's decision only on August 2, 2007.

The case was tried in the absence of the organisation's representatives, as the summons was sent to a non-existent address of the organisation. Since the defendant could not be present at the court hearing, evidence that YHRM was still carrying out its lawful activities and observing the legislation in force was not presented.

Only a massive solidarity campaign organised by the YHRM supporters and other civil activists from different countries, as well as the intervention of the famous international human rights NGOs made the FRS officials change their decision and withdraw their claim.

All the efforts to introduce amendments to the NGO legislation undertaken by the Russian and international NGOs, international organizations during the two years that passed after its adoption had no result. As some respondents point out, the government only simulates the process of consultations with civil society and is not ready for a true dialogue on this issue. The pack of proposed amendments is already worked out by an expert group of NGO representatives, but now it needs to be lobbied properly. The role of the EU in this process could be rather important. The proposals on mechanisms of such influence include the integration of cooperation in the human rights sphere in the new EU-Russia partnership agreement, including the issue of NGO legal environment into the agenda of the EU-Russia summits and other negotiations at the highest level, expert consultations with government officials and the involvement of Russian and international NGOs representatives in such consultations.

The issue of changing the current NGO legal environment in Russia seems to be the key one in developing dialogue between the national government, the EU and the civil society, as only in case the existing administrative burden is removed from the Russian NGOs and the “presumption of guilt” is no more used will they be able to express independent views and actively participate in policy debates without being afraid of the possible consequences.

According to the questionnaire responses and other sources, it is clear that if some NGOs ever are involved in the consultations process, these are mainly the ones which are generally focused on policy development and have long-established co-operation with the Russian government. Only one of the respondents pointed out that their organization (the National Youth Council of Russia) has been consulted in the process of shaping EU external policy for Russia, and this is the organization which in fact exercises the function of a mediator between youth organizations and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. No other organization out of the list of respondents (among them acknowledged experts in their respective areas) has been involved on the political dialogue and strategic levels. Moreover, the majority of them are not even aware of such opportunities.

Seemingly the only exceptions from this rule are the EU-Russia regular consultations on human rights, organized twice a year since 2005. A group of eminent Russian human rights NGOs succeeded in lobbying the organization of special conferences parallel to official consultations involving human rights defenders from Russia and EU member states. One of the questionnaire respondents – the Informational and Analytic Centre “Sova” mentioned that they make use of this mechanism. Another respondent – the International Youth Human Rights Movement was first invited to participate in the up-

coming round of consultations which will take place in mid-April in Ljubljana.

At the operational level the situation looks better: 9 out of 19 respondents mentioned that they have ever been beneficiaries or partners of the projects with funding from the EU. The majority of respondents pointed out that local organizations do not have equal access to EU funding. There is a significant “language barrier” as the full information on the procedure of receiving a grant is not widely available in Russian, and the proposal should be written and presented in English. Several local support offices of the EU-Russia partnership programmes are not able to cover all the regions of Russia by their activities, and their efforts in disseminating information and providing training on the process of writing and submitting proposals are obviously not sufficient.

Besides TACIS and EIDHR such instrument as the “Youth in Action” programme was mentioned by two respondents. This programme can be used as an example of a financial aid instrument which provides a rather good access to funding for local and small organizations.

sub-granting opportunity (with proper limitations and transparent procedure) could be a good remedy in this case, giving the opportunity for small organizations to receive all the information in Russian, apply in Russian, easily consult the donor at any phase of the project cycle, etc.

One of the respondents representing a partner organization of one of the current macro-projects with EU funding also pointed out that “Western partners are often not aware of the Russian context and sometimes can be counter-productive”. So, partnership with European NGOs should not be a general obligation, and the possibility and extent of their involvement in Russian projects should depend on particular projects.

According to the respondents, the amounts of the financial aid should not be lowered, as a number of important spheres of NGO activities (such as human rights defense or environment protection) will not be a priority for national funding (neither state nor private) in the near future.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

The main challenge for effective implementation of the partnership principle mentioned by nearly all the respondents was the lack of information on existing opportunities of participation and involvement on all the levels. Namely, there is no specialised Internet resource accumulating the information for NGOs of the neighbouring countries; the opportunities of the local support offices are limited as well as their geographical scope, absence of the relevant experience among the majority of Russian NGO leaders.

The opportunities mentioned by the participating NGOs include their expert potential in their respective fields, first-hand knowledge and independent views of the situation in the Russian society, partnership relations with European NGOs and networks. Two respondents mentioned such an opportunity as contacts with European Parliament deputies and other European politicians.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The authors think that the following conclusions and recommendations should be drawn as a result of the research:

Dialogue development

The main policy recommendation concerning the interaction between the EU and the Russian civil society is to organize regular consultations with the CSOs on the full range of issues of EU-

Russia cooperation. The proposed particular mechanisms for this include:

- forming a special group of interested NGOs;
- creating a multi-language web portal with drafts of new policy documents with a search engine and tools for discussion (forums, etc.);
- conducting periodic meetings of the representatives of Russian NGOs with the EC Delegation officials (e.g. twice a year);
- organizing meetings with local NGOs in the regions of Russia;
- identifying a particular person in the EC Delegation staff responsible for organizing consultations and collecting the input of NGOs on the EU external policy issues;
- creating an electronic list informing the NGOs about new initiatives and negotiations.

As a model for structured consultations one of the existing ones may be used: either “Civil G8”, the Human Dimension meetings of the OSCE or the International NGOs Conference of the Council of Europe. In any case, there is a need for defining a pool of organizations, which are eligible to participate in such consultations (e.g., through open applications of those willing which are reviewed by a responsible body on the basis of clear criteria). Those “accredited” organizations should get access to the drafts of policy documents in the fields of their activity and/or interest (e.g., by having access to the restricted section of the above-mentioned web portal) and have the opportunity to express their point of view.

Financial aid effectiveness

Financial aid should be restructured to be more relevant to the current political and legal situation in Russia. The key recommendations in this sphere may be as follows:

- to focus funding programmes on new and small local organizations;
- to increase the role of Russian experts with first-hand knowledge of the situation in assessing proposals and making decisions on project funding;
- to introduce the practice of institutional support for NGOs (e.g. those who have been beneficiaries of macro- or micro-projects grants in the past years);
- to provide more training and consultations to potential applicants on preparing and submitting grant proposals (e.g. thorough existing technical assistance instruments);
- to introduce a sub-granting option for big scale projects;
- to lower the language barrier for Russian NGOs (at least, by making the first stage of applying for funding conducted in Russian);
- to adjust the conditions of funding to the current Russian legislation in taxation, etc.;
- to review the thematic priorities for funding;
- to create wide channels of dissemination of the information on current competitions and tenders.

Improving legal environment

Substantial efforts should be undertaken to improve the existing NGO legal environment in Russia. This can be done through:

- integrating the cooperation in the human rights sphere in the new EU-Russia partnership agreement;
- including the issue of the NGO legal environment on the agenda of the EU-Russia summits and other negotiations at the highest level;

- conducting expert consultations with government officials with involvement of Russian and international NGOs representatives.

The survey organizers hope that by following these recommendations it will be possible to raise the role of the Russian civil society in the process of cooperation between Russia and the EU in all the spheres of strategic partnership. Moreover, as Russia is recognized a key partner of the EU in the Eastern Europe and the NIS region, it will also contribute to the democratic transition and stabilization process in the region as a whole.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

SERBIA



Prepared by Miljenko Dereta,
Civic Initiatives

1. About the survey

This report is based on the following sources: 42 answered ITS questionnaires, discussions on the issue of the partnership principle during the Annual Assembly of the Federation of NGOs of Serbia (FENS) that gathered 250 delegates, consultations within the Council of FENS (17 members), continuous contacts with numerous NGOs and Civic Initiatives' research NGOs in Serbia from 2005 as reference data.

The questionnaire was translated into Serbian by EHO and distributed through Civic Initiatives and FENS mailing list to about 420 CSOs throughout Serbia. The number of CSO that answered was relatively low, all together 42 CSO or 10% of those contacted answered (although in professional marketing 7% of answers to direct mail is considered average and successful). That is why during the Fifth Annual Conference members of FENS discussed issues from the questionnaire and the Council of FENS had two meetings dedicated to the relations of local NGOs, governments and EU.

Participating NGOs reflect very well the NGO scene in Serbia. Among those that answered are several big and very influential (Belgrade) organizations but the majority are average and small local organizations active in very different areas ranging from human rights, education, minorities, environment, domestic violence, social issues, elderly people to informal youth groups and cultural associations. This diversity is reflected in the answers we received especially in the description of their access to information and to domestic and international institutions as well as in defining priorities.

Since Civic Initiatives is the leading organisation dealing with civil society issues and involved in advocacy activities for civil society positioning and development, 3 members of our team analysed the most frequent answers from the information gathered and tried to systematise them.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The current state of cooperation of civil society with both national governments and EC delegation/EC is mostly perceived as “**bad**”. The main reason for this is the lack of institutional mechanisms for consultations on any governmental level. That is why relations with national government are described as random, depending on the

personal good will of individuals that are in decision making positions. There is a continuous demand from CSOs for an institutional framework starting with the Law on NGOs which is still pending in the parliament EIGHT YEARS after the beginning of changes in Serbia. This law should set the basic frame for necessary changes of financial and tax regulations and for creating a favorable environment for civil society development. CSO perceive the current law as unfavourable for NGOs (60%) and even as a threat to NGOs (30%). Only two organisations described the current legal frame as favourable for NGOs.

There is obviously no defined policy towards CSOs from the Government and the main obstacle to that is that most political parties have a negative position towards them. Those that share our value system perceive us as competition, whilst the radicals and nationalists perceive us as enemies. Very few understand the role and importance of CSOs for the development of the country and even avoid promoting the necessity of relations between the government and CSOs publicly for fear of “loosing votes”. At this moment the Council for Relations with CSOs formed by President Tadic is the only formal body in Serbia. One must say that more structured and regular cooperation exists with the Office for EU Integration and the PRSP Office of Deputy Prime Minister and that the Ministry for Youth and Sports initiated and successfully finished a partnership process of drafting the Strategy for Youth in Serbia. Around 70 CSO participated in the process.

CSOs have supported and drafted laws on Freedom of Access to Information, on the Ombudsman, on media regulations but in the process before adoption some basic principles have been erased from these drafts and they do not fulfil the necessary standards. The focus of CSO activities is now on pressuring government to put the “im-

perfect” laws in practice as state institutions systematically obstruct their implementation.

On the local level cooperation varies from town to town and only confirms the lack of general policy. Although the Law allows and even recommends that municipalities form a Council for relations with CSO it rarely happens. A lot of efforts and funding has been allocated to establish cooperation between local authorities and CSO and important results were achieved in jointly creating municipal development strategies. Unfortunately there is no continuity as this cooperation usually ceases to exist after the end of (foreign) funding or after elections and change of governing structures.

NGOs feel even more distant from cooperation with EC delegation/EC. Only 2 CSOs were included in the consultations on any issue mentioned in the questionnaire and even that as parts of international networks. There is very limited communication with the EC country office and a lot of dissatisfaction with the slow and inefficient decision making process and procedures when it comes to calls for proposals. There is also dissatisfaction with the fact that government is imposed as intermediary in the communication. It is only recently that direct consultations with CSO have been put in practice. CSO also point out that although there is often conditioning of the government to cooperate with CSO in implementation of different projects, nobody monitors this cooperation and it is often only simulated and misused.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

CSOs feel generally eliminated (overlooked, marginalised, underestimated) from the process. This is due to two factors:

One, the Serbian Government avoids any formal cooperation and recognition of the CSO role and capacity;

Two, CSOs have high expectations to be treated as partners as they played a crucial role in political change in the year 2000. Additional dissatisfaction comes from a feeling of an enormous loss of time in “explaining the obvious”. For instance many recommendations on what steps should be taken in concrete situations in Serbia were rejected by EU interlocutors and later proved to be the right reactions and solutions to the situation, but it was too late to implement them. There is a general feeling that consultations with CSO are more formal than substantial. Here I must say that since Slovenia took responsibility for the dialogue there is more attention to the voice of Serbian CSOs.

General challenges:

- Marginalisation of local and smaller CSOs and orientation towards bigger NGOs.
- Lack of timely information from all sources (EU, local)
- Information not accessible especially to smaller organisations.
- Language. Many organisations mentioned the problem of documents not being translated into local language i.e. Serbian.
- Not enough financial and technical capacity (computers, internet access) to gather information actively and for participation in the dialogue.
- CSO are concentrated on struggle for survival and not on general issues and policies;
- Government as imposed intermediary in this dialogue avoids any critical comments and eliminates “uncomfortable” interlocutors.
- Almost complete dependence of CSO on foreign funding.

Opportunities:

- Competence and expertise of CSOs
- High motivation and experience
- Stable pro European value base of CSOs
- Good regional relations of CSOs (going back to 1990's)

4. Conclusions and recommendations

- There is no continuous research and updated analysis of the situation and position of CSOs in individual countries and the region in general (except the latest survey in Croatia). Serious research in each individual country and a desk top follow up comparative regional analysis is the first serious step for defining a fact base new policy. It should include evaluation of CSO results and contributions in different aspects of fulfilling EU standards.
- Western Balkans and Serbia specifically are challenged by permanent crisis and a dynamic chain of events that demand fast and flexible reactions. Serbian civil society is used and experienced to function in difficult and unfavourable conditions, to react efficiently to new situations and needs of their beneficiaries. In Serbia CSOs see the current political leadership as the source of instability, inefficiency, corruption and disrespect of the rule of law. At the same time they are pushed and conditioned to cooperate with the Government and this creates tensions even among CSOs. This complicated situation demands specific treatment that implies flexibility and immediate reactions. Such a mechanism should be developed.
- EU should exert more pressure on the Serbian Government concerning the position and treatment of CSOs' is the answer that appeared in 75 % of questionnaires.
- EU should have more **direct contacts** and dialogue with CSOs as it is the most stable part of Serbian society when it comes to

reforms, economic development, respect of human rights, security issues, in two words - EU integration. This dialogue should be PUBLIC in the sense that information about its existence could contribute to the repositioning and perception of CSOs in Serbia. Establishing mechanisms for regular consultations is an important step in that direction.

- Sustainability of CSOs is a precondition for their participation in the dialogue. This requires an important change in the criteria and procedures of EU funding. Current rules make it impossible for almost 90% of CSOs to apply for funding. It results in both profit and non-profit EU organisations winning the projects and implement them in Serbia with minimal engagement of existing local know how. You can often hear a local comment saying “They don’t know why they came.” The effects of such treatment are quite negative and they reflect on the overall impact of those projects. This is one element of the answer to the question “Why are things changing so slowly?”
- More attention and funding should be given to CSO capacity building (70%). Consultations on the real needs of local CSOs should be carried out before designing these programs. Implementation should be assigned to local training teams whenever possible.
- There is a strongly expressed need for more timely information on EU documents translated in the local languages.
- More donor coordination is necessary as the lack of a common strategy was evaluated as harmful for CSOs in almost 90% of answers.
- The question whether local networks or an office in Brussels would be more efficient the answer was split 50/50 but many answered BOTH. A permanent presence of CSOs in Brussels and Strasbourg should be seriously considered.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

TURKEY



**Prepared by Rana Birden
Turkish Association for Supporting and Training
Women Candidates**

1. About the survey

By the beginning of December 2007 ECAS established a first contact with the Third Sector Foundation as partner organization in Turkey. But due to the overloaded agenda of TUSEV, the task including translation and dissemination of the survey and reporting has been forwarded to Ms. Rana Birden NGO consultant and member of the board of the Association for Support for Training of Women Candidates (KA-DER).

Methodology:

Before the dissemination of the survey, EC Delegation to Turkey has been informed about the process and the conference which will be held in Slovenia, in April 2008. Task Manager from EC Delegation Section C welcomed this initiative and responded positively for the assistance of the dissemination. A list of targeted NGO has been sent to the consultant.

By mid January, both versions of the survey (Turkish and English) had been disseminated to the target groups in

- Direct e-mail contacts more than 200 NGO representatives which were existing in consultant's address book
- Sending via STK e-mail groups network; such as youth-ngo, ngo-announcement, turkey-eu... (genclik_stk@yahoogroups.com; stk-duyuru@yahoogroups.com; tr-ab-stk@yahoogroups.com)
- List of NGOs forwarded by EC Delegation
- Announcement on two biggest NGO portals; www.stgm.org.tr; www.genclikpostasi.org

The deadline was 8th of February, and within and after the deadline only 4 NGOs sent back the survey. (The reason behind that can be discussed during the round table meeting)

As a result, an additional information gathering methodology has been put in place. By mid March, the consultant, during all conference or all formal and informal meeting has informed her colleagues about this initiative and got feed backs about what they think on the partnership mechanism between NGO and EC and/or governmental institutions. In addition to face to face simple interview, the consultant revised some documents, articles and conference papers

in order to gather reliable data on consultation mechanism between civil society in Turkey and EU institutions and national government.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

Background Information

The recognition of Turkey as a candidate for accession at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 ushered a new era in the relations between Turkey and the EU. For both parties, Helsinki marks a qualitatively new beginning and a process of strategic relationship. In parallel to the candidacy process financial assistance began to focus on supporting Turkey in its preparation for EU membership. As a result Turkey has been receiving pre-accession assistance from the EU since 2001, under the Turkish Financial Instrument. Funds are programmed on an annual basis under National Programmes for each year. As from 2007, this pre-accession Financial Instrument for Turkey has been replaced by the [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance \(IPA\)](#) which provides pre-accession assistance for both candidate and potential candidate countries.

Cooperation between Civil Society and EC at programming and implementation level

Starting from 2001, EU has underlined the immense role of the civil society on the way to membership. Parallel to the substantial change of the legal infrastructure in Turkey in order to meet Copenhagen Political Criteria, civil society in Turkey started to enjoy the new legal environment and the process of strengthening of the civil society has been taken in place through financial assistance of the EU. The priority of the EU regarding NGOs in Turkey has been to support small-scale and emerging NGOs springing up in different

parts of Turkey. (Different from the period 1996-2002) The Commission aimed for NGOs in Turkey to develop their capacity in project design and implementation, fundraising, communication, public relations and employment in order to achieve the ultimate goal; to construct a more balanced relationship between the state and the society, thus contributing to the development of Turkish democracy in practice. However, particularly between 2002-2006 it is hard to say that the European Commission and/or Delegation to Turkey has showed any willingness to include civil society in the programming process. The consultation process has always been between the EC and the Turkish authorities, the programmes and their projects are selected and included in the annual national programme. And EC attributed to civil society only the role of good implementation of the projects so that they contribute to the harmonization process. It was only one and a half years ago that the EC delegation started to establish consultation mechanism. During the IPA multi annual indicative planning process, EC delegation shared the draft document with some NGOs via e-mail announcement. No meeting has been arranged. Lastly EC delegation asked comments again via e-mail in March 2008 for the EIDHR call for proposals which was already ready. (The EC delegation should be asked whether they have received any feedback).

On the basis of the survey, all NGO representatives have mentioned that none of them have been consulted during the programming process of EU external assistance.

Cooperation between civil society and EC at implementation level

On the basis of the rapporteur's experience, all task managers at EC delegation are really helpful for better implementation of EU funded civil society projects. CSO projects in Turkey starting from

2003, have been contracted by CFCU (Central Finance and Contracts Unit) under the auspices of the DIS system. As a result, CSOs in Turkey are facing different systems of management. The projects managed by EC delegation became much easier after having experienced CFCU's requirements. In addition to the complex EU bureaucracy, Turkish bureaucracy has entered into the system. Therefore only well qualified national wide and experienced CSO can apply for funds and implement relatively successfully. Programmes solely opened for grassroots and/or local NGOs such as the regional development programme, are likely to fall into the trap of consultant companies who usually leave them alone during the implementation process in case those CSOs have been awarded for funding.

This problem appeared clearly in the surveys too. CSOs in Turkey find EU projects extremely complex and difficult in the application procedure and they find that the calls for proposal are discouraging. Additionally, the documents such as guidelines for the preparation of EU projects are not translated in Turkish. Out of 4 only one respondent has already implemented an EU funded project.

Cooperation between civil society and EC at policy level

As regards cooperation at policy level, compared to the programming and implementation level, Turkish civil society has more of a voice. Apart from grass roots NGOs, the biggest NGOs based in Ankara and Istanbul are taken quite seriously by the officials of EU member states as well as EC authorities. For many years having only heard the official line about Turkey, these circles enjoy the opportunity to engage in genuine exchanges of views with NGOs representing different views in Turkey. The fact that EU authorities are listening to big Turkish NGOs has strengthened the standing of many of them on the domestic scene as well. This shows clearly that, grassroots and local NGOs, due to their low capacity of advocacy, lack of

human resources, language barrier and very low level of networking are not represented at EC authorities level. The only challenging example of the power of network is Turkish women NGO's network. Turkish women NGOs became member of European Women's Lobby and advocate women rights at EU level by several means such as contributing to European Parliament reports on women and attending conferences in Brussels etc. Last but not not least, the cooperation at policy level exists but is not a very structured mechanism. For example no draft strategy papers ad programme are available at an early stage and are not also available in Turkish.

Cooperation between civil society and Turkish government at programming level

The relationship between civil society and state institutions has improved slowly starting from late 90's but it is still hard to say that the cooperation is healthy.

At EU programing leve there is no information or a consultation mechanism. However some level of consultation mechanism has been established for the preparations on the negotiation chapters. NGOs are asked to contribute on the negotiation chapters which are related to their areas. On the basis of the survey, one respondent mentioned that “ *the meeting for the accession negotiations were too short notice. It was more in the direction of asking support of CSOs to the draft document rather than taking into consideration the proposals*”.

At the policy level it is extremely hard to say that there is real cooperation mechanism between state and civil society. One should also notice that the EU momentum no longer exists in Turkey and this phenemenon directly effects deepening a good level of communication between government and civil society. Right based CSOs generally prefer to conduct campaigns in order to get public attention and to exert pressure on the policies of the government. Very re-

cently intellectuals, civil society actors, and academics have called on the government to take steps for further development on EU membership.

On the basis of the information gathered from different civil society actors, the only reason of the Turkish authorities to call for the contribution to the process is because the EU asks them to do so. As a result, *“no real cooperation, just getting together”*.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

On the basis of the surveys some interesting points are described in the following:

- More information relayed on what is EU partnership principle
- Having more contact with their counterparts in the EU (developing international networking)
- Improved capacity building activities towards CSOs
- Create best cases like the Women NGOs network
- Translation of source of information into Turkish, more training kits in Turkish
- Inclusion of small and local NGOs in the decision making process networks.
- Communication at all level

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Recommendation for cooperation between EU and civil society: All the questionnaires show that the quality of the information on EU external policies and financial assistance at EU level is fair or poor, where as the quality of the information at national/regional/local level and from other sources is relatively good. Thus the quality of information at EU level should be improved by providing more

sources in Turkish. Draft documents and strategy papers even at an early stage should be shared with relevant CSOs and preferably in Turkish so that local NGOs can also contribute to the process.

Open meetings with stakeholders should be encouraged and the number of CSOs consulted should be representative. The list of the invited CSOs should be available and open to access by everyone.

In order to have regular and structured consultation, it is suggested that neighbouring states and pre-accession states should be encouraged to actively participate in Open Method of Coordination. Opportunities for CSOs from different countries to come together should be available and supported. Lastly, the EU should show the support to the development of CSO not only by providing financial assistance.

As regards increasing the cooperation and structured dialogue with national government, respondents are in favour of EU's presence and its pressure towards government. However, the process should be well monitored.

Country report:

The implementation of the Partnership Principle in the EU Neighbouring Countries

UKRAINE



**Prepared by Tetyana Danyliv
GURT Resource Centre**

1. About the survey

GURT Resource Centre was one of the ECAS's partners which have agreed to conduct research on implementation of the partnership principle in the EU neighbouring countries. The purpose of the survey was to assess the role that civil society in the EU neighbouring countries plays in shaping, implementing and monitoring EU policies and programmes.

The methodology suggested for this survey was based on the questionnaire for CSOs working in the country. So, in January 2008 we

have started with a so called open call for participation addressed to Ukrainian CSOs by publishing information about the survey and the questionnaire in different on-line resources and mailing lists, including GURT weekly newsletter. The level of responses from the open call was very low and at the next stage we have sent personal requests to leaders of CSOs and recognised experts in civil society (more than 40 organisations have been contacted and 20 questionnaires received). Based on these actions we received quite a representative pool of participants, though at the same time we understood that this could not be enough information. Besides questionnaires GURT's experts have used the following forms of information gathering as telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, review of articles, brochures and books published by NGOs, analysis of official information and reports.

The *scope of organisations* which participated in the survey was quite diverse with different characteristics.

- **Geography**

There were organisations from different parts of Ukraine - West, East, South and Central part, namely from the following oblasts: the city of Kyiv, Lvivska oblast, Volynska oblast, Zakarpatska oblast, Donetska oblast, Mykolaivska oblast, Autonomous Republic of Crimea. It should be mentioned that more than 70% organisations are only registered in these cities or oblasts, but carry out their activities throughout Ukraine.

- **Years of operation in the country**

For the purpose of the survey we considered that the organisation should have at least 2 years of work experience to be able to provide relevant information for the research. Thus all organisations participating in the survey had more than 3 and most have more than 10 years of experience in Ukraine. (The “oldest” organisation was registered in 1990 and the “youngest” in 2004).

- **Number of staff**

An average number of staff of participating organisation is equal to 8-10 with the minimum of 2 full time employees to a maximum of 49. However, it should be mentioned that a lot of organisations involve volunteers in the process of project implementation or experts who work on a contract basis.

- **Policy areas and sphere of activities**

The following policy areas and spheres are covered by the participating organisations: social policy (social support to elderly people, social protection, social services to different groups), youth policy including access and quality of education, gender policy, economic development, European integration, civil society development, rule of law, elections, human rights, good governance and electronic governance, social capital development, regulatory reform, sustainable development, local self-government, international relations, regional security, national security policy, anti-corruption, criminal justice reform, juvenile justice, humanisation of court system and punishment execution system, tourism, culture, agriculture development, media development.

Finally, personal experience, information and knowledge of experts working on this research have been taken into consideration in other chapters of the report.

2. Key findings on the current state of implementation of partnership principle

The results of the survey on participation in the process of shaping EU external policies and programming EU external assistance differ a lot from the results on involvement in the process of monitoring implementation of external policy, namely of EU-Ukraine Action Plan. An interesting fact is also that most organisations have negatively answered almost all questions on participation and involvement meaning that there was no coordinated and systematic process of consultation from the side of European Union, but at the same time they gave a lot of examples of participation and input.

Before presentation of results under different aspects of the current state of dialogue it would be necessary to give some background information which could be different from other countries. In Ukraine the process of consultations with civil society organisations on the issue of ENP and ENPI started in 2003-2004 when the Delegation of the European Commission was developing the new policy and possible new funding instruments. The process of consultations with CSOs has been organised in different ways such as: round table discussions with NGOs, expert survey, evaluation of current funding programmes (TACIS as the biggest one). These activities have taken place 3-4 years ago and were not mentioned in this survey due to changes in personnel and lack of so called organisational memory.

The next important issue in EU-Ukraine relations was the preparation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan, which was adopted in February 2005 for 3 years. It was just in the first months of the new government after long political conflict and instability, after the Orange Revolution and all the connected events in Ukraine. As most experts mentioned in current survey state: “the current Action Plan was adopted almost secretly and very quickly. There was no proper consultation in the government, let alone civil society”. But when

the situation was stabilized Ukrainian CSOs started to be actively involved in monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan and learning about new funding instruments which started to be in place from 2007.

In analysing the results of the survey we present the following findings.

- **Shaping EU external policy and programming of EU external assistance**

Most organisations do not have experience of involvement in consultations on the issues of EU external policy and EU external assistance. Some organisations mentioned that they had the opportunity to participate in several round tables organised by the Delegation of the European Commission in the process of developing the EU-Ukraine Action Plan. At the same time they stressed that in fact it is the obligation of the Ukrainian government to organise such series of consultations with CSOs in the process of preparation of the Action Plan and not the Commission. Several organisations also said that in fact, it is very difficult to be involved in shaping EU external policy not being an EU member, so they very often use partnerships with other European organisations or networks which “have more lobbying opportunities in Brussels” and they consider this as an effective form of advocacy. As one of the reasons for low level of participation ‘lack of knowledge on EU decision-making process and procedures at different levels’ was mentioned.

On the programming level, several organisations mentioned that they provided their recommendations to the government representative on possible sections and items for the Annual Action Programme. They also consider this as a very important opportunity for CSOs in case they have not participated in the level of strategies and policies.

- **Monitoring of EU external policy**

Most organisations have been involved in the process of evaluation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan in different ways. In fact a very extensive process of consultations on evaluation of implementation of EU-Ukraine Action Plan (which had to end in February 2008, but probably will be extended for one more year) has been organised by the Delegation of European Commission over several months. In December 2007 the Delegation has widely distributed the call for evaluation of Action Plan implementation addressed to Ukrainian NGOs. The information was placed on the Delegation's website and placed on the most popular on-line resources such as the GURT portal and Civic Space. Besides, the EuroProstir Portal has asked CSOs to copy materials sent to the Commission on this portal. Unfortunately, there were only 3 inputs placed which means low level of real participation of CSOs.

The call for written inputs has been followed by a series of round table discussions organised by the Delegation of European Commission. The discussions have been organised on different parts of the Action Plan and organisations with relevant experience and expertise have been invited and asked to submit their written input as well. Most organisations situated in Kyiv mentioned in their questionnaires that they have participated in these round tables, only few submitted their written contributions, but most do not know how their views and feedbacks will be taken into consideration and whether they will be counted.

Besides recent consultations on the implementation of EU-Ukraine Action Plan, there was on-going public monitoring and annual assessment of the Action Plan implementation. This initiative was undertaken by the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies after Olexander Razumkov. In the framework of the Centre's project there were alternative reports on the Action Plan imple-

mentation developed and presented on the year of 2005 and 2006. And now the experts group is working on the 2007 report. This process of public monitoring was also a great opportunity for CSOs to express their positions. Mainly the experts group consisted in Kyiv-based think tanks, but the CSOs from regional and local level were consulted at different stages.

• Implementing the EU Programmes/projects

Around 50% of participating organisations have experience of implementing EU funded projects, but mainly as partners, not as applicants. Most of the organisations implemented micro-projects and few organisations have been involved in implementation of large-scale projects. The main concern expressed by the organisation was that most of the EU projects provide support and assistance to the government and thus Ukrainian CSOs could not compete for implementation of these projects. Most organisations also said that small local NGOs do not have equal access to EU funds because several reasons including technical as well as language of applications and the amount of grants which are too big for small local NGOs and which are not able to make the necessary own contribution.

One of the good options for increasing access of smaller NGOs to EU funds is that most organisations supported the idea of sub-granting, but they also stressed that this mechanism should be properly developed and would be appropriate only in some spheres such as capacity building of CSOs. At the same time a lot of social issues require a complex approach and partnerships between government and CSOs in implementation of large-scale projects.

• Coalition and networking

Most organisations has evaluated the effectiveness of coalitions and networks in Ukraine as fair in the sphere of influence on deci-

sion making at national and EU level. Most organisations consider that the culture of coalition building and networking is very low in Ukraine and a lot of coalitions have been created for short-term purposes or stimulated by political issues and now they almost do not exist. Several networks which have been founded in recent years have been assessed as successful and effective because of clear strategy and active advocacy and lobbying activities with government agencies. The overall assessment of effectiveness of coalition and networking was evaluated, as at the beginning stage and that Ukrainian CSOs need support and assistance from European colleagues.

• Legal environment

The NGO legal framework in Ukraine was mostly assessed as inadequate and only few organisations mentioned that the legislation is good enough now. The main areas of concerns were the following: territorial status of civic associations; complicated, long and not affordable registration process; limited access to service provision for different social groups; limited possibilities of income generation; low level of consultations with NGOs or lack of culture and procedures for NGO participation in policy development and decision-making on local level.

As positive factor several organisations mentioned that during last two years NGOs have been more actively involved in the process of drafting legislation and developing suggestions and amendments. The Cabinet of Ministers Decree on Concept of Support of Civil Society Development which was adopted in November 2007 was mentioned as an important legal act creating more possibilities for cooperation with government for CSOs.

In general Ukrainian CSOs are very active in developing suggestions on necessary changes to NGO legislation though it would be more helpful to include the issue of changes to NGO legislation as

requirement from the EU in the process of preparation of next EU-Ukraine Action Plan.

- Donor coordination

Position of organisations has been divided as for the necessity of enhancement donor coordination – some organisations expressed opinion that donor programmes are enough coordinated while some said that international donors very often duplicate their activities. Though, some respondents mentioned that such duplications could be caused by different centres of decision making, i.e. donor organisations' offices in Ukraine could coordinate their activities very good on local level, but they could not influence on the high top level where the decisions on funding streams are usually made. There was one special opinion that sometimes one donor could duplicate its own projects which could then have very bad influence especially in cases where policies and laws on national level are targeted for changes.

However, most of organisations agreed that the lack of donor coordination does not have sufficient impact on civil society development. Even more, sometimes lack of coordination between of CSOs and formulation of common strategies and approaches could be more damaging for civil society development.

3. Opportunities and challenges for dialogue

One of the most serious *challenges* for the organisations to be involved in the process of development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies and programme is lack of coordinated and systematic approach from the EU institutions as well as from the government side. All organisations mentioned that the level of information provision from the Delegation of the European Commission has significantly improved during last two years, but at the same time information activities are more focused on promotion of EU

activities. There were almost no information sessions and seminars aimed at explaining and presenting ENP and ENPI for representatives of civil society. For a lot of organisations current funding instruments are also unknown.

The other important challenge for participation which was mentioned was low level of sustainability of CSOs. Most of outstanding and experienced CSOs strive for survival (ensuring office space, key personnel salaries etc) and thus it is difficult to be actively involved in advocacy and lobbying. Comparing with EU-based CSOs Ukrainian organisations do not have independent funding streams and cannot allocate time for involvement in consultations at different level. One of the respondent said that “We know that it is important to be aware of current process in EU-Ukraine relations and regular provide our feedback, but the possible changes will take years and we need to implement projects and pay salaries and office costs today”.

Among the other difficulties which Ukrainian NGOs face in the process of participation the following were mentioned: complexity and lack of clarity of consultations procedures and very complicated decision-making process which do not give possibility to monitor whether recommendations have been taken into consideration or not; limited information on the Delegation’s web-site about possibility to be involved except special invitations to provide feedback; documents are not very often available in Ukrainian, only in English; very limited access to drafts of the documents at the preparation stage.

Speaking about *the opportunities* for CSOs to be involved it should be mentioned that all surveyed organisations first of all mentioned their understanding and good knowledge of the situation in some territories as well as in specific spheres. They could provide more relevant information and gather data which sometimes are not available at national level. Such local expertise was mentioned as the

most important and necessary for development of programmes and projects.

The other important issue is experienced and highly qualified staff and experts. Most of the organisations stressed that during more than 10 years of their activities in Ukraine they have established contacts and partnerships with different European organisations. This gave opportunity for their staff to learn the best practices and adopt them for Ukrainian conditions. Some of the respondents mentioned that we already have developed a lot of different and effective models through implementation of pilot projects and now the efforts should be more directed to dissemination of these experiences. And this could be focus of European Commission which should support making existing practices sustainable and effective.

The other opportunities mentioned were the following: good image and reputation of organizations; experience in development and management of projects; participation in the activities of European associations and networks; cooperation with international experts and consultants; access to information about meetings, call for proposals etc; experience in development of position papers and policy recommendations.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions which could be drawn from the survey is that first of all the process of CSOs' involvement is not properly coordinated and is not of a systematic character; secondly, there is limited access to information on different levels; thirdly, Ukrainian CSOs do not have capacities and time to effectively participate in the consultation process. On the other hand, there is more active participation in the process of monitoring of EU-Ukraine Action Plan implementation.

The following recommendations were made by participating organisations.

For the Government of Ukraine

- To establish procedures of consultation with CSOs at the level of central government bodies on different aspects of the Action Plan implementation and projects review. To include more detail and a more specific part on Civil Society Development in the next EU-Ukraine Action Plan based on previous wide consultations with CSOs.
- To create opportunities and ensure that the necessary changes are made to legislation which will ensure sustainability of CSOs.
- To involve more actively experts and professionals from the CSO sector in the implementation of projects funded by EU.

For EU institutions

- To disseminate more widely current policy and programme documents in Ukrainian and place them on the Delegation's web-site.
- To increase pressure from the EU to the government of Ukraine in the sphere of harmonisation of Ukrainian legislation on CSOs with European standards through establishing clear objectives and criteria.
- For the Delegation of European Commission to Ukraine to organise regular (quarterly) or at least annual meetings on review of ENP implementation in Ukraine by involving CSOs from national and regional level, government representatives and media.
- To organise more information sessions in the regions (using the potential and resources of information centres, on-line resources, networks and coalitions aimed at promotion of Eu-

ropean values, standards and practices) on policies, operating programmes, decision-making process, procedures of communication and consultations, funding opportunities.

- To make such instruments as TAIEX and Twinning available for CSOs with the focus on building capacities of Ukrainian CSOs in advocacy at European level.
- To increase the component of capacity building for CSOs in funding instruments and to diversify the granting scheme to ensure equal access to EU funds for small local NGOs.



ITS questionnaire

**Assessing the implementation of the partnership
principle in the EU neighbouring countries**

Eastern europe

Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

**Seize the opportunity to make your voice
heard in the EU!!!**

Background

The partnership principle, as a tool for improving effectiveness of bottom-up strategies and empowerment of civil society, forms part of the Action Plans established under the Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and of the pre-accession process. The recently adopted IPA and ENPI regulations make clear reference to civil society actors not only as potential beneficiaries of EU funding but also as important partners in shaping the EU policies and programmes. The first attempt to assess the implementation of the partnership principle in the EU neighboring countries was undertaken by ECAS in the framework of the Brussels conference “New external financial instruments – new opportunities for civil society in the EU neighborhood”, which was organized on 10 October 2007⁷⁰. Resulting in concrete recommendations for stronger civil society inclusion in EU external policies and programmes, the conference provided the background for drafting the questionnaire.

This questionnaire⁷¹ aims to gather key information from CSOs working in Western Balkans, Turkey, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia on the implementation of the partnership principle. It intends to assess the role that civil society in the EU neighbouring countries plays in shaping, implementing and monitoring EU policies and programmes. Pointing out shortcomings and obstacles occurring at the EU and national levels in applying the partnership principle in practice, this survey should result in more detailed recommendations

⁷⁰ The conference report, background materials and speakers' presentations are available at ECAS website: <http://www.ecas.org/product/91/default.aspx?id=629>. For more information about ECAS ITS advocacy process, please consult <http://www.ecas.org/product/91/default.aspx?id=644>

⁷¹ The questionnaire is addressed to Western Balkan countries. Eastern Europe countries and Turkey also receive this questionnaire, which is adjusted to the relevant EU policies.

and a background paper as how to make the partnership principle work.

The questionnaire is structured in 3 main parts:

- Introductory part consisting of general questions
- The second part presenting the current state of play of the dialogue between the EU and neighbourhood civil society at the policy and programming levels
- The third part addressing more open questions enabling to reflect on current shortcomings and potential improvements in applying the partnership principle on the ground.

Respondents are free to add other aspects and are encouraged to send any supporting material (including reports, researches, publications etc.) to complement the information provided.

Why participate? It is important to note that results of this questionnaire will be presented during the international conference to be held under the Slovenian Presidency in Ljubljana. This event is expected to result in the “Ljubljana Declaration” on building up a sustainable “triangle” partnership relationship between civil societies, the EU and national governments.

ECAS partner organizations from the Western Balkans, Turkey and Eastern Europe are asked to send the questionnaire and the report from the Brussels conference in order to enable the civil society community to contribute to the development and formulation of the Ljubljana declaration. This survey enables all of us to send a political message calling on the EU to develop a coherent and coordinated strategy for the sustainable civil society development in their countries.

Part I

Get involved in ECAS ITS advocacy process!

Please forward this questionnaire to your partners!

General questions

1.1. Your contact details:

Name:

Surname:

Function:

email:

telephone :

1.2. Your organisation profile:

name:

Year of establishment:

Number of staff:

address:

website:

Policy areas:

mission:

1.3. Date when the questionnaire has been filled out

PART II

EU – neighbourhood civil society partnership relations current state of play

The level of policy dialogue

1. Shaping the eu external policies

1.1. Was your organisation consulted during the drafting of documents such as: ENP strategy papers, ENP EU Action plans (Moldova, Ukraine), roadmaps towards the common spaces (Russia)

- YES
- NO

if yes, please describe the way the consultation process was organised:

By whom it was organised?

What form did the consultation take? (e.g. written consultation, public discussion, unofficial meeting etc.)

Were small/local NGOs involved in these consultations?

Were your ideas taken into consideration?

PLEASE add your comments

1.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved into shaping of EU external policies?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

2. Monitoring eu external policies

2.1. Was your organisation involved in monitoring of ENP EU Action plan implementation

- YES
- NO

If yes, please precise the role and the level of involvement of your organisation

Has your organisation been involved in drafting of country progress reports?

Does your organisation carry out independent monitoring activities?

PLEASE add your comments

2.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisations to get involved into monitoring of EU external policies

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

Strategic and operational levels Shaping and implementing the EU programmes/projects

1. Strategic level – strategic planning and programming

1.1. Was your organisation consulted during the programming process of EU external assistance:

ENPI Country/regional/cross-border strategy papers, ENPI national indicative programmes, ENPI annual action programmes

- YES
- NO

if yes, please describe the way the consultation process was organised:

By whom it was organised?

What form did the consultation take? (e.g. written consultation, public discussion, unofficial meeting etc.)

Were small/local NGOs involved in these consultations?

Were your ideas taken into consideration?

Please add your comments

1.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisations to get involved with programming of the EU financial assistance?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

2. Operational level – implementing the eu programmes/projects⁷²

2.1. Was your organisation involved in the implementation of the EU programmes/projects such as TACIS, EIDHR instruments, Community action programmes?

- YES
- NO

If Yes, please refer to the specific programmes/projects you were involved in and precise the role of your organisation

Was it a small (micro grant) or large-scale project?

Do your or other organisations have a direct role (as a project holder or partner) in the EU project implementation?

⁷² As IPA and ENPI implementation has not been started yet, the questionnaire will cover only the shaping phase (strategic planning and programming) of these instruments. As for the implementation, please refer to the previously available geographical instruments (i.e. TACIS), the thematic instrument EIDHR and Community action programmes.

Please add your comments

Are civil society organisations the main beneficiaries? Or do they have a role as partners?

Do you think small and local NGOs have equal access to the EU funds?

Should the possibility of sub granting be available?

2.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for you to get involved with the implementation of EU programmes/projects?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

PART III

Strengthening partnership relations between the eu and neighbourhood civil society

1. Filling the information gap

1.1. How do you assess the quality of the information on EU external policies and financial assistance?

From the EU level:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

From the national/regional/local level:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

From other sources:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please specify the “other sources”:

Please add your comments

1.2. What are the main difficulties for you to access and understand such information?

Please add your comments

Can you easily access relevant documents?

Are the draft strategy papers and programmes available at an early stage (i.e. before the consultation process takes place)? Are they available in your language?

1.3. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the EU delegation to your country in facilitating communication between the EU and civil society?

• Very good • Good • Fair • Poor

Please add your comments

2. Improving consultation methods at eu and national levels

2.1. What are the mechanisms (if any) that enable you to get involved in the policy-making process?

Please add your comments

2.2. What would you suggest in order to have regular and structured consultation?

Please add your comments

3. Building coalitions

3.1. How do you assess the effectiveness of the coalitions and networks from your country in influencing the decision-making process at national and EU levels?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please add your comments

How inclusive are they? Are the small/local NGOs represented in these coalitions and networks?

3.2. Do you consider that coalition-building is a condition for interacting effectively with the EU institutions and national authorities?

Please argue

3.3. What do you think would give a stronger voice to your organisation at EU level: being part of an EU association and/or be represented by a national NGO office in Brussels?

Please argue

4. Increasing csos capacity building

4.1. How do you assess CSOs capacity in your country to get involved with the EU? (in terms of shaping, implementing and monitoring of the EU policies and programmes)

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please add your comments

4.2. From your point of view, do EU programmes put enough emphasis on NGO capacity-building?

- YES
- NO

Please add your comments

Do you think the EU programmes target sufficiently CSOs capacity-building at local level?

4.3. Do you think that the technical assistance (such as TAIEX and Twinning instruments) should be also available for CSOs?

- YES
- NO

If yes, please specify what activities should be targeted at first place (e.g. study visits, trainings etc.)?

5. Enhancing donors coordination

5.1. Do you think that the problems related to the lack of donor co-ordination (e.g. donor fragmentation, wasteful duplication of efforts) currently undermines the sustainable civil society development in your country/region ?

- YES
- NO

Please add your comments

5.2. What efforts should be undertaken by the donors active in your country/region in order to accelerate the development of the civil society?

Please add your comments

6. Enabling ngo legal environment

6.1. How would you characterise the current NGO legal framework in your country?

- NGO-friendly
- inadequate
- NGO-threatening

Please add your comments

6.2. What should be done in order to improve it?

Please add your comments

Does your government cooperate with CSOs in order to change the current NGO legal framework?

How the EU could encourage your government to improve the NGO legal environment?

7. Other

Please add any comments, remarks, recommendations etc. you may have.

Please send us any relevant information you may have underpinning your answers (reports, documents, studies etc.) together with the filled in questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and efforts in completing
this questionnaire!

We are looking forward to meeting you at Ljubljana conference!



Its questionnaire

Assessing the implementation of the partnership principle in the EU neighbouring countries

Western Balkans

**Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia,
Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia**

**Seize the opportunity to make your voice heard
in the EU!!!**

Background

The partnership principle, as a tool for improving effectiveness of bottom-up strategies and empowerment of civil society, forms part of the Action Plans established under the Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and of the pre-accession process. The recently adopted IPA and ENPI regulations make clear reference to civil society actors not only as potential beneficiaries of EU funding but also as important partners in shaping the EU policies and programmes. The first attempt to assess the implementation of the partnership principle in the EU neighboring countries was undertaken by ECAS in the framework of the Brussels conference “New external financial instruments – new opportunities for civil society in the EU neighborhood”, which was organized on 10 October 2007⁷³. Resulting in concrete recommendations for stronger civil society inclusion in EU external policies and programmes, the conference provided the background for drafting the questionnaire.

This questionnaire⁷⁴ aims to gather key information from CSOs working in Western Balkans, Turkey, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia on the implementation of the partnership principle. It intends to assess the role that civil society in the EU neighbouring countries plays in shaping, implementing and monitoring EU policies and programmes. Pointing out shortcomings and obstacles occurring at the EU and national levels in applying the partnership principle in practice, this survey should result in more detailed recommendations and a background paper as how to make the partnership principle work.

⁷³ The conference report, background materials and speakers' presentations are available at ECAS website: <http://www.ecas.org/product/91/default.aspx?id=629>. For more information about ECAS ITS advocacy process, please consult <http://www.ecas.org/product/91/default.aspx?id=644>

⁷⁴ The questionnaire is addressed to Western Balkan countries. Eastern Europe countries and Turkey also receive this questionnaire, which is adjusted to the relevant EU policies.

The questionnaire is structured in 3 main parts:

- Introductory part consisting of general questions
- The second part presenting the current state of play of the dialogue between the EU and neighbourhood civil society at the policy and programming levels
- The third part addressing more open questions enabling to reflect on current shortcomings and potential improvements in applying the partnership principle on the ground.

Respondents are free to add other aspects and are encouraged to send any supporting material (including reports, researches, publications etc.) to complement the information provided.

Why participate? It is important to note that results of this questionnaire will be presented during the international conference to be held under the Slovenian Presidency in Ljubljana. This event is expected to result in the “Ljubljana Declaration” on building up a sustainable “triangle” partnership relationship between civil societies, the EU and national governments.

ECAS partner organizations from the Western Balkans, Turkey and Eastern Europe are asked to send the questionnaire and the report from the Brussels conference in order to enable the civil society community to contribute to the development and formulation of the Ljubljana declaration. This survey enables all of us to send a political message calling on the EU to develop a coherent and coordinated strategy for the sustainable civil society development in their countries.

Part I

**Get involved in ECAS ITS advocacy process!
Please forward this questionnaire to your
partners!**

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1.1. Your contact details:

Name:
Surname:
Function:
email:
telephone :

1.2. Your organisation profile:

name:
Year of establishment:
Number of staff:
address:
website:
Policy areas:
mission:

1.3. Date when the questionnaire has been filled out

PART II

EU – neighbourhood civil society partnership relations current state of play

The level of policy dialogue

1. Shaping the eu external policies

1.1. Was your organisation consulted during the drafting of documents such as: Enlargement strategy papers, Accession/European partnerships and Action plans for the implementation of the priorities of these partnerships

- YES
- NO

if yes, please describe the way the consultation process was organised:

By whom it was organised?

What form did the consultation take? (e.g. written consultation, public discussion, unofficial meeting etc.)

Were small/local NGOs involved in these consultations?

Were your ideas taken into consideration?

PLEASE add your comments

1.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved into shaping of EU external policies?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

2. Monitoring eu external policies

2.1. Was your organisation involved in monitoring of Enlargement/SAP Action plan implementation?

- YES
- NO

If yes, please precise the role and the level of involvement of your organisation

Has your organisation been involved in drafting of country progress reports?

Does your organisation carry out independent monitoring activities?

Please add your comments

2.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved into monitoring of EU external policies

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

Strategic and operational levels Shaping and implementing the EU programmes/projects

1. Strategic level – strategic planning and programming

1.1. Was your organisation consulted during the programming process of EU external assistance such as: IPA Multi-annual indicative planning documents (MIPD), IPA multi-annual and annual action programmes

• YES

• NO

if yes, please describe the way the consultation process was organised:

By whom it was organised?

What form did the consultation take? (e.g. written consultation, public discussion, unofficial meeting etc.)

Were small/local NGOs involved in these consultations?

Were your ideas taken into consideration?

PLEASE add your comments

1.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved with programming of the EU financial assistance?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

2. Operational level – implementing the eu programmes/projects⁷⁵

2.1. Was your organisation involved in the implementation of the EU programmes/projects such as: PHARE, CARDS and EIDHR instruments, Community action programmes

- YES
- NO

⁷⁵ As IPA and ENPI implementation has not been started yet, the questionnaire will cover only the shaping phase (strategic planning and programming) of these instruments. As for the implementation, please refer to the previously available geographical instruments (i.e. PHARE, CARDS), the thematic instrument EIDHR and Community action programmes.

If Yes, please refer to the specific programmes/projects you were involved in and precise the role of your organisation

Was it a small (micro grant) or large-scale project?

Do your or other organisations have a direct role (as a project holder or partner) in the EU project implementation?

Please add your comments

Are civil society organisations the main beneficiaries? Or do they have a role as partners?

Do you think small and local NGOs have equal access to the EU funds?

Should the possibility of sub granting be available?

2.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for you to get involved with the implementation of EU programmes/projects?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

PART III

Strengthening partnership relations between the eu and neighbourhood civil society

1. Filling the information gap

1.1. How do you assess the quality of the information on EU external policies and financial assistance?

From the EU level:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

From the national/regional/local level:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

From other sources:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please specify the “other sources”: _____

Please add your comments

1.2. What are the main difficulties for you to access and understand such information?

Please add your comments

Can you easily access relevant documents?

Are the draft strategy papers and programmes available at an early stage (i.e. before the consultation process takes place)? Are they available in your language?

1.3. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the EU delegation to your country in facilitating communication between the EU and civil society?

• Very good • Good • Fair • Poor

Please add your comments

2. Improving consultation methods at eu and national levels

2.1. What are the mechanisms (if any) that enable you to get involved in the policy-making process?

Please add your comments

2.2. What would you suggest in order to have regular and structured consultation?

Please add your comments

3. Building coalitions

3.1. How do you assess the effectiveness of the coalitions and networks from your country in influencing the decision-making process at national and EU levels?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please add your comments

How inclusive are they? Are the small/local NGOs represented in these coalitions and networks?

3.2. Do you consider that coalition-building is a condition for interacting effectively with the EU institutions and national authorities?

Please argue

3.3. What do you think would give a stronger voice to your organisation at EU level: being part of an EU association and/or be represented by a national NGO office in Brussels?

Please argue

4. Increasing csos capacity building

4.1. How do you assess CSOs capacity in your country to get involved with the EU? (in terms of shaping, implementing and monitoring of the EU policies and programmes)

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- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please add your comments

4.2. From your point of view, do EU programmes put enough emphasis on NGO capacity-building?

- YES
- NO

Please add your comments

Do you think the EU programmes target sufficiently CSOs capacity-building at local level?

4.3. Do you think that the technical assistance (such as TAIEX and Twinning instruments) should be also available for CSOs?

- YES
- NO

If yes, please specify what activities should be targeted at first place (e.g. study visits, trainings etc.)?

5. Enhancing donors coordination

5.1. Do you think that the problems related to the lack of donor co-ordination (e.g. donor fragmentation, wasteful duplication of efforts) currently undermines the sustainable civil society development in your country/ region ?

- YES
- NO

Please add your comments

5.2. What efforts should be undertaken by the donors active in your country/region in order to accelerate the development of the civil society?

Please add your comments

6. Enabling ngo legal environment

6.1. How would you characterise the current NGO legal framework in your country?

• NGO-friendly • inadequate • NGO-threatening

Please add your comments

6.2. What should be done in order to improve it?

Please add your comments

Does your government cooperate with CSOs in order to change the current NGO legal framework?

How the EU could encourage your government to improve the NGO legal environment?

7. Other

Please add any comments, remarks, recommendations etc. you may have.

Please send us any relevant information you may have underpinning your answers (reports, documents, studies etc.) together with the filled in questionnaire.

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ITS questionnaire

**Assessing the implementation of the partnership
principle in the EU neighbouring countries**

Turkey

**Seize the opportunity to make your voice heard
in the EU!!!**

Background

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Get involved in ECAS ITS advocacy process!

Please forward this questionnaire to your partners!

Part I

General questions

1.1. Your contact details:

Name:

Surname:

Function:

email:

telephone :

1.2. Your organisation profile:

name:

Year of establishment:

Number of staff:

address:

website:

Policy areas:

mission:

1.3. Date when the questionnaire has been filled out

PART II

EU – neighbourhood civil society partnership relations current state of play

The level of policy dialogue

1. Shaping the eu external policies

1.1. Was your organisation consulted during the drafting of documents such as: Enlargement strategy papers, Accession/European partnerships and Action plans for the implementation of the priorities of these partnerships

- YES
- NO

if yes, please describe the way the consultation process was organised:

By whom it was organised?

What form did the consultation take? (e.g. written consultation, public discussion, unofficial meeting etc.)

Were small/local NGOs involved in these consultations?

Were your ideas taken into consideration?

Please add your comments

1.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved into shaping of EU external policies?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

2. Monitoring eu external policies

2.1. Was your organisation involved in monitoring of Enlargement/SAP Action plan implementation?

- YES
- NO

If yes, please precise the role and the level of involvement of your organisation

Has your organisation been involved in drafting of country progress reports?

Does your organisation carry out independent monitoring activities?

PLEASE add your comments

2.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved into monitoring of EU external policies

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

Strategic and operational levels Shaping and implementing the EU programmes/projects

1. Strategic level – strategic planning and programming

1.1. Was your organisation consulted during the programming process of EU external assistance such as: IPA Multi-annual indicative planning documents (MIPD), IPA multi-annual and annual action programmes

- YES
- NO

if yes, please describe the way the consultation process was organised:

By whom it was organised?

What form did the consultation take? (e.g. written consultation, public discussion, unofficial meeting etc.)

Were small/local NGOs involved in these consultations?

Were your ideas taken into consideration?

PLEASE add your comments

1.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for your organisation to get involved with programming of the EU financial assistance?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

2. Operational level – implementing the eu programmes/projects⁷⁸

2.1. Was your organisation involved in the implementation of the EU programmes/projects such as: Turkish Pre-accession instrument, EIDHR instruments, Community action programmes?

⁷⁸ As IPA and ENPI implementation has not been started yet, the questionnaire will cover only the shaping phase (strategic planning and programming) of these instruments. As for the implementation, please refer to the previously available geographical instruments (i.e. Turkish pre-accession instrument), the thematic instrument EIDHR and Community action programmes.

- YES
- NO

If Yes, please refer to the specific programmes/projects you were involved in and precise the role of your organisation

Was it a small (micro grant) or large-scale project?

Do your or other organisations have a direct role (as a project holder or partner) in the EU project implementation?

Please add your comments

Are civil society organisations the main beneficiaries? Or do they have a role as partners?

Do you think small and local NGOs have equal access to the EU funds?

Should the possibility of sub granting be available?

2.2. What are the main opportunities and difficulties for you to get involved with the implementation of the EU programmes/projects?

Opportunities:

Difficulties:

PART III

Strengthening partnership relations between the eu and neighbourhood civil society

1. Filling the information gap

1.1. How do you assess the quality of the information on EU external policies and financial assistance?

From the EU level:

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

From the national/regional/local level:

- Very good
- Good
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Please specify the “other sources”: _____

Please add your comments

1.2. What are the main difficulties for you to access and understand such information?

Please add your comments

Can you easily access relevant documents?

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Please add your comments

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2.1. What are the mechanisms (if any) that enable you to get involved in the policy-making process?

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Please argue

3.3. What do you think would give a stronger voice to your organisation at EU level: being part of an EU association and/or be represented by a national NGO office in Brussels?

Please argue

4. Increasing CSOs capacity building

4.1. How do you assess CSOs capacity in your country to get involved with the EU? (in terms of shaping, implementing and monitoring of the EU policies and programmes)

• Very good • Good • Fair • Poor

Please add your comments

4.2. From your point of view, do EU programmes put enough emphasis on NGO capacity-building?

• YES
• NO

Please add your comments

Do you think the EU programmes target sufficiently CSOs capacity-building at local level?

4.3. Do you think that the technical assistance (such as TAIEX and Twinning instruments) should be also available for CSOs?

- YES
- NO

If yes, please specify what activities should be targeted at first place (e.g. study visits, trainings etc.)?

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5.1. Do you think that the problems related to the lack of donor co-ordination (e.g. donor fragmentation, wasteful duplication of efforts) currently undermines the sustainable civil society development in your country/ region ?

- YES
- NO

Please add your comments

5.2. What efforts should be undertaken by the donors active in your country/region in order to accelerate the development of the civil society?

Please add your comments

6. Enabling NGO legal environment

6.1. How would you characterise the current NGO legal framework in your country?

• NGO-friendly • inadequate • NGO-threatening

Please add your comments

6.2. What should be done in order to improve it?

Please add your comments

Does your government cooperate with CSOs in order to change the current NGO legal framework?

How the EU could encourage your government to improve the NGO legal environment?

7. Other

Please add any comments, remarks, recommendations etc. you may have.

Please send us any relevant information you may have underpinning your answers (reports, documents, studies etc.) together with the filled in questionnaire.

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