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# Online consultation with Member States

## Survey response 1

### Information details

Name of the State:
Slovak Republic
The institution responding to the survey:
The Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Development of the Civil Society, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic

### Questions

<p>1. What innovative practices did authorities in your state adopt to facilitate civil society's input to decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online channels? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)</p> <p>Within the pandemic situation COVID 19, the Slovak Republic has created completely new structures as a flexible response to the crisis - the Central Crisis Staff, the Pandemic Commission of the Government of the Slovak Republic, a consortium of experts.</p> <p>The Pandemic Commission of the Government of the Slovak Republic is a multi-ministerial, coordinating, consulting, expert and advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic established for proposing measures to protect lives and health and reduce the economic burden on the population.</p> <p>These structures are composed of ministers, experts and experts in the field of medicine / doctors, epidemiologists, infectologists, experts in the field of critical infrastructure and other persons, including representatives of civil society. At the same time has been wrote the Pandemic plan that is guaranteed by the Government of the Slovak Republic and is available in online form too. Regarding the travel of Slovak citizens abroad, the e - hranica e/border application has been create, where it is necessary to register and it is valid for half a year.</p>
<p>2. Are there innovative practices that authorities in your country used to enable safe and inclusive online participation, which encourages a diversity of participation, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)</p> <p>Educational institutions have been partially or completely close and many of them have switched exclusively to online education.</p> <p>Civil society, and in particular non-governmental organizations, have provided public institutions, and in particular schools, with the tools and know-how for the massive use of online / distance learning. NGOs have also mediated and continue to mediate access to education for the most vulnerable and excluded groups (especially marginalized Roma communities / children).</p> <p>It was also necessary to respond to the ad hoc situation, quickly and adequately, in the form of online meetings of conferences, seminars, lectures, etc.</p> <p>All state administration institutions of the Slovak Republic, as well as government advisory bodies, including the participation and participation of civil society (non-governmental non-profit organizations), ran the online system relatively quickly and smoothly: The introduction of a home office for state administration employees was complicated mainly due to access to the protected network. It was also complicate by the creation and provision of adequate spatial and technical equipment and quality and safe connection from home.</p>

3. Do you have examples of good practice in including civil society in designing and implementing strategies to respond to the pandemic? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

The involvement of a wide range of civil society and especially non-governmental non-profit organizations proved to be extremely beneficial during the first wave of the coronavirus, when the Slovak Republic faced an unprecedented crisis. As an important reaction to the situation in the first wave of the coronavirus, the initiative of the Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organizations in Slovakia, which is an umbrella organization, has been create.

It developed the basic methodology and precise procedures in a crisis situation in the context of COVID 19 and the involvement of civil society / volunteers in cooperation with crisis management by the state, so that their state subsequently used and implemented / repatriated in the first wave, when citizens returning from abroad placed in selected facilities in Slovakia. The procedure in question was chose mainly to protect the rest of the population from infection.

Massive psychological help for citizens (especially the elderly and children) has also been and is still provide to people through telephone and online lines, especially through non-governmental organizations. Volunteers and other representatives of the non-governmental sector were and are involved in the process during nationwide testing as well as subsequent vaccination.

4. Do you have examples of innovative steps taken to minimise the impact of measures imposed during the pandemic, including emergency measures, on the free and safe functioning of civil society and on public freedoms (of expression, access to information, assembly, and association) as well as on the protection of personal data and privacy? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

Access to information has been ensure for all citizens in the same way, including civil society. Towards civil society as a whole, it should be note that very often information, regulations / measures and ordinances have changed too fast and often contradicted each other. Information regarding COVID 19 was publish in the form of decrees of the Chief Hygienist of the Slovak Republic.

Repeatedly, there has not been a sufficient legal and practical interpretation for them, which would clearly explain to civil society representatives how to proceed. at the same time, the government and other public institutions informed about the adopted regulations / measures by their own means as well as through the media. Regarding assembly - at the time of the declaration of a state of emergency, the right to assemble is limited for all citizens without distinction.

5. Did authorities in your state implement any innovative measures to protect and facilitate civil society access to resources in the COVID-19 context? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

A recovery and resilience plan as a strong policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic at both national and EU level is urgently need. The message regarding post covid times need to be addressed in advance so that the Slovak Republic is ready to respond as a whole.

The key ministries of the Slovak Republic have set up project offices through which the mentioned resources will be using on selected projects that are helpful in the recovery after the Covid 19 pandemic. We assume that civil society will be the beneficiaries of the recovery and resilience plan.

Legislative changes to the relevant laws was also approved, which in the context of COVID 19 postponed the deadlines for assigning part of the tax to natural and legal persons in favour of non-governmental non-profit organizations, to take into account the exceptional negative impacts on NGOs.

6. Has your state identified any good practices to identify, and protect civil society from, online intimidation and attacks (e.g. online threats, harassment, organized smear campaigns etc.)? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

Close cooperation between the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Civil Society Development strengthened campaigns and education in the online space, strengthening the protection of victims of crime, which really increased during a pandemic.

The Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, through its official website, has set up a group focusing on a new phenomenon, namely the fight against hoaxes and disinformation regarding the pandemic, vaccinations that spread through social networks and mass media.

The Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic is launching the "Hybrid Threats" project, which is also intend to comprehensively address this issue in cooperation with civil society.