Keeping up the Momentum:
Improving Civil Society Cooperation with Public Institutions
in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Final Report

Keeping up the Momentum: Improving Cooperation Between Public Institutions and Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey

prepared by the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law

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Preface

We are pleased to present the first regional report on the state of cooperation between civil society organisations (CSOs) and public institutions in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. TACSO developed the concept for this report in the spring of 2012 and the report was researched and written by the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) in the summer and autumn of 2012. The report covers the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as Macedonia), Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey and focuses on national policies as well as regional dimensions and mechanisms for cooperation between the two sectors.

TACSO's initial intention was to prepare the report as background material for our regional conference on cooperation between CSOs and public institutions, "**Keeping up the Momentum: Improving Cooperation Between Public Institutions and Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey**" in Skopje, November 2012. However, it has become apparent that the report fills a gap and provides a snapshot of the current state of cooperation between the two sectors in the region.

During the TACSO Skopje regional conference the participants representing CSOs and governmental institutions had the opportunity to review and to discuss the draft of the report. National and regional commitments and action plans based on suggestions, comments and workshop results from the Skopje conference have been incorporated in this final report. We hope that you will find it useful.

Palle Westergaard
Team Leader
December 2012

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* *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

The Report was commissioned by:

Technical Assistance for
Civil Society Organisations

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The technical assistance service contract for the implementation of **"Capacity Building of Civil Society in the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) countries and Territories"** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) known as the project Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) is an EU-funded project (EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi-additional services) led by SIPU International AB on behalf of a consortium from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Poland and Romania. The main purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of civil society organisations and to strengthen their role within a participative democracy. The main expected outcomes of this project are: increased influence of CSOs in democratic decision-making processes; strengthened capacity of CSOs to further their agenda; improved capacity of CSOs in service delivery; strengthened cooperation and networking among the CSOs and between external stakeholders and CSOs; raised public awareness of CSOs and improved public image of CSOs.

The Report was developed by:

European Center for Not-for-Profit Law

The **European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)** is a leading European resource and research centre in the field of civil society law, based in Budapest. It aims to promote an enabling legal and fiscal environment for civil society in Europe and to convey European experiences – especially from countries that underwent democratic transition – to other parts of the world. ECNL has unparalleled expertise in helping to develop and implement laws and policies in key areas affecting the development of civil society. These include: government/civil society cooperation, compacts and other policy documents; government funding of civil society; sustainability of civil society organisations (CSOs); CSO participation in decision-making; contracting of CSOs for social services provision; and volunteering, among others. ECNL staff has more than 10 years of experience in promoting CSO law reform and have provided support that has directly and positively influenced more than 50 laws affecting CSOs across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). For more information see www.ecnl.org.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) has entered into an agreement with the Regional Office of the Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) to prepare a report on institutional cooperation between the public authorities (government/parliament) and civil society organisations in the Western Balkans and Turkey. [1] This Report was presented at the TACSO regional conference: *"Keeping up the Momentum: Improving Cooperation between Public Institutions and Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey"*, held in Skopje on November 7-8, 2012.

The overall aim of the report is to present the current state of institutional cooperation between the government/parliament and civil society organisations (CSOs) in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey by providing analyses of the rationale and the ensuing benefits of cooperation by outlining critical issues and providing recommendations as to how improve the current mechanisms of institutional cooperation and to increase the role of CSOs in that process. [2] It seeks to highlight good practices, outline key factors for success, identify challenges, and facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons learnt among the countries concerned. The report deals with the institutional mechanisms of cooperation and policy documents at the national level only. The report specifically covers the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Kosovo*, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as "Macedonia"), Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The methodology for the report is based on the desk research and the outcomes of the questionnaire, which was developed by ECNL in consultation with TACSO (see Annex I) and completed by key stakeholders in the countries concerned. It is also based on extensive consultations with TACSO resident advisers and other knowledgeable individuals.

Recognising that any comparison of national regimes is a formidable task, an effort is made in the report to build comparisons on common denominators that are sufficiently loose to integrate less significant variations among the countries that are examined, but sufficiently specific to produce meaningful comparisons.

The report is divided into five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter II provides an analytical framework of government/parliament cooperation with CSOs. This section reflects on the underlying

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1   This report was developed by ECNL experts: Dr. Dragan Golubović, Dr. Eszter Hartay and Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans.

2   For the purpose of the report, the term: *civil society organisations* (CSOs) is understood to encompass any organisation which meets the following criteria: 1) it is established voluntarily; 2) it is established by a private instrument (contract, act on establishment), rather than by law; 3) it may be a membership or non-membership organisation; 4) it is not part of the government structure; 5) it is established to pursue public or mutual benefit goals, rather than generate profit. Therefore, the notion includes associations, foundations, private institutions, not-for-profit corporations, and any other organisation fulfilling the foregoing criteria. The notion; *non-governmental organisations* (NGOs), which is often used inter-changeably with the term CSO is used in the report only insofar as it is part of the official name of a particular institutional instrument for cooperation.

*   *This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

rationale and the ensuing benefits of the institutional mechanisms for cooperation. It also reflects on how and why this process came about in Europe with a focus on the Western Balkans and Turkey. What are its main features? What is the European Union (EU) policy perspective on these processes? What is the role of EU integration processes in the development of those mechanisms? Chapter III provides an overview of the existing policy tools and mechanisms that have supported and facilitated cooperation between government/parliament and CSOs and highlights successful models for cooperation that may be considered in other countries. It focuses on the following institutional mechanisms on a national level:

1. Government offices/units/departments for cooperation with CSOs;

2. Contact persons in various line ministries responsible for cooperation with CSOs;

3. Advisory bodies tasked to further public authorities – CSO cooperation (councils or similar cross-sector bodies);

4. Public foundations or similar type of entities (e.g. agencies) providing financial support for civil society development and increasing the capacity of CSOs.

In addition, pertinent policy documents and their underlying role and content are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter IV provides analyses of the results of the research which was conducted among key stakeholders in the countries concerned, and which was based on the comprehensive questionnaire, which ECNL developed in cooperation with TACSO. Based on the results of the research, Chapter IV identifies key strengths and challenges of the current mechanisms for cooperation; examines the role of EU integration in this process; and highlights examples of good practices. Chapter V provides recommendations as to how to respond to major challenges identified in the research and discussed at the Skopje conference.

II. FRAMEWORK FOR INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The following section provides an introductory overview of issues this report seeks to address by reflecting on the underlying rationale of the institutional mechanisms for collaboration between public authorities (government officials/civil servants and parliamentarians) and civil society. It also reflects on how this process came about in Europe with a focus on the Western Balkans and Turkey. What is the EU policy perspective on these processes and what is the role of the EU integration process in the development of those mechanisms?

1. Framework for institutional collaboration

A framework for institutional collaboration between public authorities and CSOs is understood to encompass various structures, bodies and mechanisms that are geared to implementing specific responsibilities related to cooperation between public authorities and CSOs. Those include government/parliamentary body or a designated person within the government/parliament whose primary mandate is to nurture and support collaboration between those institutions and CSOs, such as the government's offices/units/departments for cooperation with CSOs; contact persons with various line ministries or with parliament; public foundations/agencies for civil society; government's council on civil society, or similar cross-sector advisory bodies (see *infra*, Chapter III). These mechanisms are widely referred to as 'institutional' because of the *underlying reason* for their introduction: *setting a platform and a framework for sustainable and on-going partnership with CSOs as their primary function*.[3] Hence, they are referred throughout the report as "institutional mechanisms for collaboration".

In addition, policy documents pertinent to CSOs' cooperation with public authorities are also discussed in the report, because they are considered an integral part of the system which supports longer term and more structured cooperation between public authorities and CSOs. Policy documents include strategies for civil society or other policy documents: compacts, memorandums of understanding and other documents which aim to create a structured dialogue between public authorities and CSOs, promote development of the civil society and citizen participation (see *infra*, Chapter III).

It is important to emphasise that *cooperation between public authorities and CSOs occurs beyond the institutional mechanisms in place* and, indeed, is *not necessarily* dependent on the existence of those mechanisms. There are many notably examples of partnership between public authorities and CSOs, which have developed despite the lack of a particular institutional mechanism and legal

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3   A partnership between public authorities and CSOs presumes that CSOs voluntarily participate in those mechanisms on equal footing with the public authorities.

instrument governing such collaboration, in particular with regard to drafting laws and strategy documents affecting CSOs.

For example, in **Turkey**, despite the lack of a general institutional mechanism for cooperation, there are several examples of successful collaboration in legislative processes on a governmental level. There is also the notable example of the Parliamentary Compromise Commission for the Development of a New Constitution in Turkey (Commission), which marks a unique participatory experience for CSOs. The process was initiated with the call of the government to all stakeholders to create a "Civil Constitution" that Turkey needed. CSOs set up platforms, networks and civic initiatives to engage in this dialogue and submitted their comments and proposals to the Parliamentary Committee for Developing the Constitution Proposal. The Commission established a website for sharing those comments and proposals. Overall, 401 civil society initiatives and 82,232 citizens submitted their comments and proposals on the new constitution.

In **Macedonia**, line ministries included CSOs in their working bodies on various occasions. Among others, representatives from civil society were involved in the working groups commissioned with preparing the Law on Pro Bono Legal Assistance, the amendments and supplements to the Electoral Code and the Law and the Strategy on Volunteerism.[4]

In **Serbia** a notable example are the Civil Society Focal Points, which were created during the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, which included more than 650 CSOs and social partners. The establishment of this mechanism was supported by the Government of Serbia, Deputy Prime Minister Office for European Integration from 2007-2009, before the Government Office for Cooperation with CSOs was established. These CSO platforms were involved in the preparation of dozens of laws, national strategies and policies impacting social inclusion of vulnerable groups. They started building their capacities to monitor expenditures allocated for vulnerable groups in state and local budgets. These platforms still exist and successfully undertake activities in cooperation with the government. In addition, the enactment of the Law on Youth in 2011 was preceded by an extensive and elaborate consultative process with youth organisations and other stakeholders, which was praised by the Council of Europe. Representatives of major youth organisations were also members of the working group commissioned to prepare the law.

2.   Mechanisms of cooperation: emergence, benefits and factors

There is no one model of institutional mechanisms for collaboration in Europe. Those mechanisms evolved over a long period of time, first in Western Europe and for the past 10-15 years in Eastern Europe, following somewhat different paths. In Western Europe the institutional mechanisms for cooperation emerged in some specific areas where an actual need for partnership was recognised and drove the stakeholders towards collaboration. Typically, this occurred in the fields of social services, environmental protection, or international aid development. Over time, the principles and models that emerged from those sporadic examples of successful collaboration evolved into the mainstream practices and eventually became more formalised (e.g. access to information, public funding, consultation and participation).[5]

The first formal instrument of collaboration between public authorities and CSOs was developed in England, in the form of the agreement on cooperation (compact) signed by the Government and CSO representatives. The compact was developed as a result of the 1996 "Deakin Report", which

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4   The process of adoption of the Law on Volunteerism has been promoted as an example of successful cooperation between the government and CSOs. See: Laws and Practices that Affect Volunteers Since 2001, ICNL, ECNL, United National Programme Volunteers, 2009 and Drafting and Implementing Volunteerism Laws and Policies, United Nations Programme Volunteers, 2011.

5   Nilda Bullain and Radost Toftisova: "A Comparative Analysis of European Policies and Practices of NGO - Government Cooperation", ECNL 2004.

provided 61 recommendations as to how to improve the relationship between the government and CSOs. Among the main recommendations in the report was a proposal for an *'agreement/concordat'* between the government and the third sector setting out a framework for their relationship. Those recommendations were largely incorporated in the Labour Party Programme and, in 1998 following on election promises; the government launched the *Compact on Relations between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector.* The compact is a legally non-binding document, which sought to promote a better working relationship between the government and CSOs, and improve the funding and procurement rules pertinent to CSOs. Along with the compact, five codes of good practices were drafted to facilitate the implementation of the compact.[6]

After England, various documents and other institutional mechanisms for cooperation were adopted/established in other European countries (France, Denmark, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, etc.). Following these examples the countries of the Western Balkans have also proceeded with the establishment of similar mechanisms and instruments.

There are several perceived ***policy considerations/benefits*** associated with the development of the institutional mechanisms for collaboration:

- *Promotion of the concept of open, collaborative and transparent governance.* All institutional mechanisms in place envision civil society participation and influence on public policies, which is the critical ingredient of a vibrant, democratic society.

- *Facilitating communication and creating platforms for structured and on-going dialogue and collaboration.* The mechanisms give recognition of existing practices and benefits. They send a message of political commitment and openness, and they give direction to future cooperation. For example, the policy documents include issues relevant to CSOs and set priorities for government's support, as well as joint action with CSOs. The government offices or focal points have made it easier for CSOs in some countries to approach public authorities, and to voice the opinions of their constituencies in addressing citizens' needs. The advisory councils on civil society have created a forum for debate and sharing responsibility for setting sector-wide policies.

- *Supporting CSOs development.* The mechanisms provide for a means for CSOs to receive increased support for their work and hence to expand the areas of their activity which are in the interest of society. For example, national foundations provide funding for civil society development through grants for institutional support, not only project activities.

> *"EU integration certainly played a role in the operation of the institutional mechanisms of collaboration, as we can say that the process of EU integration has had a positive effect on the development of CSOs – both on their expert and financial capacities. This is especially true for advocacy CSOs which have, in the process of EU integration, developed additional skills and knowledge regarding the advocacy, policy analysis etc. As a result of which they became an actor that could not be ignored but should have been more and more looked at as a partner, especially taking into account the expertise that CSOs' gained in their fields of interest."*
>
> *Respondent from Croatia*

- *Increasing involvement in policy making processes*, especially on issues that affect the sector. While public authorities involve CSOs in policy and law-making processes on various issues that affect their constituencies, the mechanisms for cooperation allow for joint policy-making on issues that influence the development of the third sector (funding, legal environment, etc.).

- *Involving civil society in the EU integration processes* is also recognised and has been the driving force behind increased practices for cooperation. The civil society is seen to play an important

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6   The compact in England was revised in 2009, and renewed in 2010. http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/.

role in the process of EU accession from the political perspective (mobilising citizens and advocating for European values, promoting the benefits of EU integration, etc.), as well as economic and institutional perspectives (strengthening capacities for optimal use of available EU funds).

The establishment of the institutional mechanisms for collaboration in the Western Balkan countries has also been influenced by ***external factors***.

- *One external factor was the influence of the EU engagement and the overall accession process in the countries*, which was well documented in the research conducted (see *infra*, Chapter IV). The EU in its various documents related to the Western Balkans has emphasised the important role of civil societies.

In its 2007 Enlargement Strategy, the European Commission (EC) for the first time identified civil society development and civil society dialogue as a core priority of the enlargement process in the Western Balkans, and defined that *"support for civil society is key to mutual understanding and to strengthening the fabric of democracy across society"*.[7] It has supported this statement by setting up a funding facility for civil society, in addition to other existing financial instruments. In the Progress Report on the Countries of the Western Balkans on their road to the EU of 2008[8], the EC noted the significance of civil society in the process of comprehensive reforms in these countries, as well as the necessity of creating an enabling institutional framework for development and operation of CSOs.[9]

The EU, through its progress reports and financial instruments, directly contributed to building the cooperation framework. In **Albania**, EU integration is also credited with playing an important role in the development of the Government Agency for the Support of Civil Society (*infra*, Chapter III). An EU funded project in **Macedonia** supported the establishment of the Government Unit for Collaboration with NGOs (*infra,* Chapter III), including capacity building of staff and the two strategies, and is currently offering to provide a similar type of support in Serbia. In **Montenegro** the EU financially supported the signing of the *Memorandum on Collaboration between the Montenegro Parliament and Democratisation and Human Rights CSOs (infra,* Chapter III).

In **Kosovo***, the EC gave significance to institutional models by noting the lack of them in progress reports, and by extending the regular Stabilisation Association Process dialogue to civil society. This is considered a unique approach. In **Turkey**, the focus on cross-sectoral cooperation led to the establishment of the Provincial Advisory Councils on EU Integration, which brings civil society and public institutions together for joint efforts on the way to the EU. Also, the establishment of Regional Development Agencies to enhance cross-sectoral partnerships and create state funding for all sectors, including civil society, was encouraged by the EU Accession Process. Currently, a consortium of CSOs is working on the code of citizen participation with EU support in cooperation with the Ministry of the EU.

In all countries concerned, the EU integration process gave rise to a more prominent participation of CSOs in public policies, including those pertinent to EU accession. As a result of the EU accession process, in **Macedonia**, the National Council for European Integration was established as a multi-sectoral body within the parliament with the aim of strengthening the activities and responsibilities of all the relevant public institutions and CSOs to secure harmonised, coordinated action towards EU accession. In **Serbia**, the *Memorandum on Collaboration between the Government's Office for European Integration and CSOs* was signed to create a framework for more effective participation of CSOs in public policies impacting on EU integration.

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7   *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Enlargement Strategy And Main Challenges 2007-2008, COM(2007) 663.*

8   *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Western Balkans: Enhancing the European perspective SEC (2008) 288.*

9   On the perceived benefits of institutional mechanisms for cooperation see also Dragan Golubovic, Branka Anđelkovic: "Institutional Mechanisms for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society: Comparative Experience and Recommendations for Serbia", Belgrade, 2009, pp. 4-6 (www.tacso. org).

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These messages and the financial support made available by the EU have contributed to governments being more open to cooperation with CSOs and have created momentum to proceed with the establishments of various mechanisms for cooperation.

- The other external factor is *'peer influence'*. Civil societies in the Western Balkan countries have forged a lasting and productive cooperation, which started in the fields of human rights and gradually expanded to other areas. This facilitated cross-border promotion of institutional models for collaboration.

This was met with governments' willingness, and in many ways preference, to consider good examples in the neighbourhood, because of the deeply rooted common legacy of the region. As a result, models of cooperation and lessons learnt were shared among countries with Croatia playing a leading and inspirational role. It established the first Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in the region, followed by the establishment of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the Council for Civil Society Development. Governments of BiH, Macedonia and Montenegro followed suit with the establishment of similar offices/units. Croatia and Macedonia are credited for having developed the first strategies on civil societies followed by the Government of Montenegro. Serbia is also moving towards the same direction.

3.   Initiatives to support regional level dialogue and experience sharing

The increased focus on collaboration between public authorities and civil society created a demand for sharing the lessons learnt in the implementation of various mechanisms for collaboration among the countries concerned. As a result, several events took place, which aimed to foster joint collaboration on the regional level.

Among the first such regional exchanges was the one organised by the Government Unit for Collaboration of NGOs in **Macedonia** targeting mainly government representatives responsible for advancing cooperation with civil society. The aim of this event was to launch cooperation and exchange of experiences between governmental bodies for cooperation with civil society in the region and to discuss ways that such cooperation could contribute to further development of civil society.[10]

Another example is the 2012 conference organised by the Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society in **Serbia**. The conference produced conclusions and recommendations developed jointly by public authorities and CSOs, which aimed to identify common issues and areas for further regional engagement, as well as setting the agenda for change. These recommendations are organised around the following issues: (1) the EU policies in support of civil society development, (2) sustainable financing of CSOs: the role of government institutions in setting up a transparent funding framework for CSOs, and (3) developing minimum standards for public consultations and citizen participation in public policies.[11]

In addition, the **Croatian** Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs hosted a regional exchange meeting for government offices from the region in October 2012. The office hosted various study visits organised for their counterparts in the region (government offices/units for cooperation) to increase their understanding of how such offices function and to increase cross-border collaboration in this respect.

One notable example of government efforts to promote regional examples and experience sharing is the initiative of the Government of **Montenegro** to develop an agreement for cooperation among

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10   Report: "Regional Conference on 'Government Cooperation with the Civil Sector'", 2008. http://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk.

11   See: Republic of Serbia, Office for Collaboration with Civil Society, "Conclusions and Recommendations from the Regional Conference Partnership For Change: Civil Society And the Governments In The Western Balkans And Turkey", 2012. http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/aktivnosti/konferencije/regionalna-konferencija-partnerstvo-za-promenu/#more-459.

the countries of the Western Balkans for advancing cooperation with CSOs.[12] The initiative aims to establish regular collaboration and communication among the governments in the region to facilitate the exchange of good practices and to advance partnerships with CSOs on the national level. The initiative is still in the drafting phase, however, should it come to fruition, it will help demonstrate their readiness and commitment to further promote and advance cooperation with civil society.

Most recently, in Skopje, **Macedonia**, on November 7-8, 2012, TACSO hosted a regional conference on institutional cooperation between public institutions and civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The conference drew 100 participants, representatives of public institutions, civil society, the media and the donor community from those countries. It created a forum to present the current status of regional and European initiatives geared towards improving institutional cooperation between public institutions and civil society. The conclusions of the Conference are tailored to encourage participants to identify and engage in next steps, which need to be taken in their respective countries, as well as in the region as a whole, in order to promote and improve institutional cooperation between public institutions and CSOs (see Annex III of the report).

4. International initiatives pertinent to institutional mechanisms for collaboration

It is important to also note that governments recognise and include the institutional mechanisms and policy documents governing cooperation with civil society in pertinent international initiatives. A most recent example is the *Open Government Partnership Initiative*.[13]

Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkey and Serbia have joined this initiative and all countries but Serbia have submitted their respective action plans, which include commitments towards the goals. In the Action Plan of **Albania**, the government commits to draft a specific law, which would create structured consultation processes with civil society and other stakeholders. In **Croatia**, the government Office for Collaboration with NGOs (Office) was instrumental in the development of the action plan in a participatory process. Among others, the plan identifies tasks that need to be implemented by the Office and the National Foundation for Development of Civil Society in order to further partnership and consultation and ensure inclusion of civil society in implementation of the commitments undertaken by the government. The **Macedonian** Government specifically included the implementation of the government's Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Sector among its commitments in the action plan. The **Montenegrin** Government invokes the government's Strategy for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations to highlight positive partnership and efforts regarding cooperation, and as a basis for further involvement of CSOs in initiatives in the action plan. The Action plan of **Turkey** envisages the establishment of a single web platform where all laws and regulations can be posted to encourage public consultations and the involvement of all stakeholders in the policy-making and implementation processes.

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12   http://www.balkancsd.net/information-services/e-mail-alerts/1238-regional-agreement-of-cooperation-between-the-governments-and-the-the-civil-society-organisations-?catid=41%3Acivil-dialogue.

13   The Open Government Partnership is a new multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. As part of this initiative each country must develop an action plan which will contain commitments towards these goals. http://www.opengovpartnership.org.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND DOCUMENTS ON COLLABORATION

As described earlier there are different forms of institutional mechanisms for collaboration and policy documents between public authorities and civil society existing in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. This chapter will present those mechanisms and their features. Specifically, it will describe the following mechanisms and models: (1) public bodies that support collaboration and development of the sector; (2) contact persons in line ministries; (3) civil society representation in parliament; (4) advisory bodies for civil society; (5) public foundations/agencies and (6) policy documents for civil society collaboration and support.[14]

1. Public bodies that support collaboration and development of the sector

Several countries in the Western Balkan region have set up a separate office or department/unit with a main mandate to foster cooperation with and support the development of CSOs. The tendency was began with the establishment of the government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in Croatia in 1998, followed by the establishment of the Unit for Cooperation with Non-government Organisations in Macedonia (2004), the government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs in Montenegro (2007), and most recently, the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society in Serbia (2011). In Bosnia and Herzegovina the Department for Cooperation with Civil Society with the state-level Ministry of Justice was established in 2008. This chapter will focus on analysing these bodies and will briefly address other types of bodies that exist.

1.1. *Public bodies with the primary role to support cooperation with CSOs*

As mentioned above, several countries established bodies whose main function is to promote collaboration, structural dialogue and partnership with CSOs across the board.

In **BiH**, the ***Department for Cooperation with Civil Society*** was set up by the government (Council of Ministers) within the Ministry of Justice.[15] The department has a broadly defined mandate, however, it does not enjoy sufficient political support within the Ministry (or for that matter within the government), and thus has struggled to play a prominent role in structural dialogue and cooperation with CSOs.[16]

The **Croatian** ***Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs*** was established in 1998 and was a first step towards creating a number of public bodies responsible for cooperation with CSOs.

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14 On various institutional mechanisms for cooperation, their distinctive features, advantages and downsides see also, Dragan Golubovic, Branka Anđelkovic: "Institutional Mechanisms for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society: Comparative Experience and Recommendations for Serbia". Belgrade, 2009, pp. 6-10.

15 In addition, in the Republic of Srpska (one of the two entities in BiH) there is a Department for Cooperation with Civil Society with the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Governance, which currently employs only one person.

16 TACSO Needs Assessment Report, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sarajevo, 2011.

In **Macedonia**, *the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs* was established in 2004, following the initiative of civil servants from the Secretariat for European Affairs and discussions involving CSOs, which underscored the significance of such bodies. The unit falls under the Sector for Policy Analysis and Coordination within the General Secretariat of the Government.

The **Montenegrin** *Office for Cooperation with NGOs* was established in 2007 following the enactment of the government's document, "*Basis of Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of Montenegro and Non-governmental Organisations*", in May 2006. This document, which was the first of the kind, was the result of a bottom-up approach and was created following an initiative of the Coalition of NGOs. The office unit falls under the General Secretariat of the government.

In **Serbia**, *the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society* was established by the government in 2010 and became operational in 2011. The establishment of the office was a result of a multi-year advocacy campaign led by a coalition of CSOs and represents an important step towards a more structural cooperation between the government and civil society. The office falls under the General Secretariat of the government.[17]

1.2. *Other public bodies playing a role in forging cooperation with CSOs*

In addition to the bodies described in the section above, there are examples of other bodies (offices, departments, commissions) within the government/ministries, which are entrusted to play a role in collaboration with CSOs. However, it is important to note that their role is rather modest, does not pertain to cooperation with CSOs across the board, and is primarily confined to certain fields and activities (e.g., social affairs, EU accession etc.).

In **Kosovo**, there are two such bodies. The *Office for Good Governance* is situated within the Office of the Prime Minister and was established with Regulation 2001/19 in the Executive Branch. The mandate of the office includes supervision of and advice to the government in areas of good governance, human rights and equal opportunities. The office is required to be pro-active regarding citizen participation in public policies and, therefore, cooperate with civil society in drafting various strategies and action plans related to human rights, minorities and gender issues.[18] In addition, there is the *Department for NGO Registration and Liaison* with the Ministry of Public Administration. The department is responsible for the registration of CSOs and has a very limited role in liaising with CSOs.

In **Turkey** there is the *Directorate for Civil Society, Communication and Cooperation*, which is facilitating communication with CSOs in one specific area, the EU accession process. The directorate was established in June 2009 and its main aim is to include civil society in Turkey's EU accession process as well as to receive their recommendations and contributions. More specifically, it is responsible for 1) informing the domestic and international public about the EU and Turkey's accession process; 2) preparing and implementing the EU's communication strategy; 3) managing financial resources for the projects within the framework of the EU Communication Strategy (EUCS); 4) cooperating with the private sector, local authorities, CSOs and universities, and assisting in the coordination of their activities. The directorate has so far organised five dialogue meetings with civil society with a view to enable CSOs to have their voice on various themes with regard to Turkey's EU accession process. For example, the Minister for EU Affairs has met with more than 300 representatives of the CSOs from different faith groups at a meeting organised by the directorate on 14 February 2012.

In addition, the *Department of Associations* within the Ministry of Interior is a rather unique body in that, in addition to being responsible for registration and supervision of associations, performs some

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17 See also Dragan Golubovic, Branka Anđelkovic: "Institutional Mechanisms for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society: Comparative Experience and Recommendations for Serbia". Belgrade, 2009, pp. 19-20.
18 TACSO Needs Assessment Report, Kosovo, 2011.

other duties. Specifically, the department: 1) provides *grants* to CSOs under the name of "project support"; 2) undertakes research on best practices of CSO-government cooperation; 3) provides technical assistance, trainings and seminars to CSOs, and produces handbooks and guidelines for legal compliance for associations; 4) drafts laws and regulations pertinent to associations; 5) launches public consultation processes inviting CSOs (e.g. to comment on changes in by-laws for the registration of associations regarding the launch of an online system); 6) promotes funding opportunities for associations via its website.

Finally, the *General Directorate of Foundations* under the Prime Ministry Office, which is responsible for the registration and audit of foundations, also perform some tasks, which may facilitate cooperation between the government and foundations. Specifically, it is mandated to 1) carry out training, research, development, cultural and publication activities on issues related to foundations; and 2) draft and review laws and regulations impacting on foundations.[19] The Foundations Council[20] is the highest decision-making body of the Foundations. The Council has a total of 15 members: 5 members are from the Directorate General; 5 members are appointed by the Prime Ministry; and 5 members are designated by foundations via an open call on the directorate's website. The Foundation Council is a decision-making cross-sector body that enables foundations to take part in the decision-making processes for developing policies and strategies, drafting laws and regulations impacting foundations. It also plays a role in the implementation of the legal framework thereof.

1.3. *Description of bodies with the primary role to support cooperation with CSOs*

Roles and responsibilities

The actual tasks of these bodies vary country by country and largely depend on when a body was established and whether a country has other institutional mechanisms of cooperation in place (e.g. Council or National Foundation as in the case of Croatia). Where other mechanisms exist, the office is considered as part of the scheme, which generally coordinates and supports the functioning of other mechanisms.

The offices/units are responsible for numerous tasks: drafting and managing the process of consultation concerning laws that affect the sector; contributing towards the policy of ensuring the financial sustainability of the sector; distributing government funding or providing support to bodies which distribute such funds; coordinating different ministries, which are responsible for nurturing cooperation with the sector; the training and education of civil servants concerning government policies towards the sector and their implementation; encouraging civic participation, open governance, and social dialogue; promoting the activities of the sector; philanthropy and promoting partnerships on the regional and local level.[21] Their specific functions can be presented under the following main areas:

1) **Government strategy**
   - Preparation of a government strategy and programme for cooperation with CSOs (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia);
   - Monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy (Croatia, Macedonia).

2) **Capacity building**
   - Organise events (roundtables, conferences, public discussion) and publish publications (Croatia, Serbia);

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19   Specifically, the Legal Counselling Department of Directorate of Foundations.
20   http://www.tusev.org.tr/content/detail.aspx?cn=318&c=68.
21   See more in Golubovic, Anđelkovic: "Institutional Mechanisms for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society: Comparative Experience and Recommendations for Serbia", Belgrade, 2009.

- Cooperation and exchange of experience with similar government institutions abroad (Croatia, Serbia);
- Education and trainings for office employees and state officials (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro).

3) *Cooperation*

- Maintain cooperation with CSOs and public authorities (Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia);
- Initiate dialogue with civil society on issues of common interest (Croatia, Serbia);
- Collect and distribute information relevant to CSOs (Serbia);
- Maintain a website, providing information relevant to CSOs such as financing opportunities, database of funding programmes, database on participation, database on consultations, etc. (Croatia);
- Regional and international cooperation (Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia).

4) *Coordination*

- Coordinate the work of line ministries and other state institutions in the field of cooperation with CSOs, public funding and consultation (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia);
- Mediation of inter-ministerial cooperation, as well as other state authorities and CSOs (Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia).

5) *Supporting advisory government bodies*

- Provide logistical and other support to advisory government bodies in terms of the development of civil society (Croatia);
- Administrative and technical support (Montenegro); professional and financial support (Croatia).

6) *Legislation affecting CSOs at large*

- Prepare a review of existing legislation and continuous updating (Macedonia);
- Initiate the adoption of strategic documents, rules, regulations and other documents relevant to the creation of an enabling environment for CSOs, and monitor the implementation of such documents (Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia).

7) *Financing CSOs at large*

- Anticipate the allocation of financial resources for partially financing projects of public benefit (Macedonia);
- Administration and evaluation of project proposals submitted by CSOs at open calls for allocation of part of the budget for CSOs as well as monitoring the awarded projects (Macedonia);
- Assess public fund allocations for supporting CSOs (Croatia, Serbia);
- Preparation of annual reports on spending of public funds granted to CSOs from the state budget and local communities' budgets (Croatia, Serbia);
- Focal point for the Community Programme "Europe for Citizens" (Croatia, Serbia);
- Participate in the programming of EU pre-accession funds supporting civil society (IPA funds) and others (Croatia, Serbia);
- Provide technical assistance for the preparation of application documents for programmes open for CSOs (Serbia);
- Monitor the usage of pre-accession funds to civil society and co-financing of CSOs' own participation in providing EU projects (Croatia, Serbia);
- Organise monitoring visits by office employees to CSOs providing EU projects (Croatia).

However, in some countries the above tasks are not fully implemented. As an example, in Serbia, the office's first year in operation was spent building internal capacities, developing its own strategy and positioning itself as a key governmental institution to deal with civil society.[22]

Human and financial capacities

In the researched countries the offices are equipped with diverse human and financial capacities. They currently employ between 3 (Montenegro) and 14 staff (Croatia, Serbia[23]). It is noted that the office in Montenegro lacks the necessary human resources capacity to carry out its duties. Due to limited staffing it is critical to have a qualified and committed staff to take on the office's responsibilities.

Both in the case of Macedonia and Montenegro the fact that the offices are situated in the General Secretariat of the Government hinders them from acting independently in terms of resource allocation (*infra*, Chapter IV).[24] In addition, they both lack clear and specifically allocated budgets.

2. Contact persons within different line ministries

Some countries have "contact persons" for CSOs at the ministerial level. The significance of these persons/departments is that they can be instrumental in the process of implementation of state policies concerning the development of the sector. When a bilateral document or strategy needs to be enforced, for example, they can be assigned to coordinate the implementation of the specific task within the line ministry.[25] In the region there are contact persons in line ministries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

For example, in the Government of **BiH** (Council of Ministers) there are contact persons for collaboration with CSOs in every ministry. The Government of the Federation of BiH (one of the two entities in BiH) has also rendered a decision on the establishment of the institutional mechanism for cooperation with civil society; however, this decision has not yet been implemented.

In **Macedonia** all line ministries have nominated contact persons for cooperation with CSOs who are connected in the inter-institutional network coordinated by the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs. Cooperation between ministries and CSOs takes place in the following forms: consultations prior to adoption of policies and laws; inclusion of representatives from the civil society in working groups, working bodies and alike established by the ministry; development and implementation of joint projects financed by the ministries, co-financed by organisations or financed by other donors; direct financing of CSOs; organisation of informative events; involvement of organisations in regional and international initiatives.

3. Civil society representation in parliament

Assigning a contact person in parliament, setting up a body within parliament responsible for civil society issues, or creating mechanisms for the involvement of CSO representatives in parliamentary committees as a more permanent mechanism can serve an important role in the legislative process and enable CSOs to voice their opinions even after the draft laws are submitted to parliament. Nevertheless, such mechanisms for cooperation are still rare in the region. Notably, in **Kosovo**, the Strategic Planning Office of the Parliament recently opened a vacancy for a *"CSO Contact Officer"* and the recruitment procedure is expected to be completed in the fall of 2012.

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22   TACSO Needs Assessment Report, Serbia, Belgrade, 2011.
23   At the moment, there are 14 employees in the Croatian office, with a plan for an additional 5 persons to be employed by the end of the year.
24   TACSO Needs Assessment Report, Montenegro, Podgorica, 2011. TACSO Needs Assessment Report. Skopje, 2011.
25   Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans: "European practices on implementation of policy documents and liaison offices that support civil society development". ECNL and ICNL, 2009.

Nevertheless, the countries increasingly involve CSO in processes in parliaments through their representation in parliamentary committees or working bodies. In **Croatia** the parliamentary working committees comprise more than 100 representatives of interest groups, selected on the basis of public call, which are serving permanent committee members and thus having regular access to MPs. The participation of CSO representatives as members, guests or observers has proved to be a useful institutional mechanism for cooperation and contributed, as an example, to the improvement of legislation addressing environmental issues (e.g. the Law on Environmental Protection, the Law on Waters, and the Law on Waste). In **Montenegro**, as a result of the signed *Memorandum on Collaboration between the Montenegro Parliament and Democratisation and Human Rights CSOs*, CSOs have gained more access to parliamentary committees. In 2011 they took part in 9 out of 11 committees. As compared to 2009 and 2010 when only a handful of CSOs (3-4) would be invited to take part in the work of the parliamentary committees, recently their number increased to 35.

In **Macedonia**, the *National Council for European Integration* is an important body bringing together parliamentary, governmental and non-governmental officials. The Council was established in 2007 and undertakes on-going dialogue on the negotiation positions of Macedonia and harmonisation of its legislation with the *acquis communautaire*. Civil society has one representative in this body, and in 2012 the Council discussed the draft Strategy of the Government for Collaboration with Civil Society in one of its sessions.

In **Turkey** CSOs are invited to parliamentary commissions for consultations on a regular basis where their area of expertise is pertinent to the work of the commission. *The Women and Men Equal Opportunities Parliamentary Commission (KEFEK)* has become a regular cooperation platform for CSOs working on gender equality issue and MPs. It holds regular consultations with CSOs and provides opinions to the MPs for draft laws and regulations. It also has the authority to supervise and inspect public authorities' actions related to gender equality.

It is also interesting to highlight the example of **Macedonia** where the association, MOST, was running the *Office for Contact between NGOs and Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia*. The motive behind the establishment of the office was the need to increase citizen participation in public policies, and to improve the skills of MPs to advocate on behalf of citizens. The office managed to fill the "missing link" in CSO efforts to address parliament and present their positions and opinions. Before the office was established, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MOST and the parliament. The office maintained a website with laws and amendments adopted by the parliament, the Constitutional Court's decisions, international treaties, as well as other materials pertinent to the legislative processes and CSO advocacy. In addition, it conducted research to support the policy and law-making processes.[26] According to MOST, the office organised 305 meetings, 82 at the request of citizens, 173 at the request of CSOs, 16 at the request of members of parliament and 9 at the request of the parliament's departments. In 2009 MOST transformed the office into an "advocacy centre" which is operational and assists CSOs' in lobbying and advocacy efforts.[27]

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26   Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans: "European practices on implementation of policy documents and liaison offices that support civil society development". ECNL and ICNL, 2009.

27   http://www.most.org.mk/index.php/mk/realized-projects/office-for-contact-between-ngos-and-the-parliament-programsprojects-36 and http://advocacy.org.mk/

4. Advisory bodies for civil society

Advisory bodies may be established in order to focus on cross-sector issues affecting all CSOs (also known as councils for civil society development) or on sub-sectoral issues affecting one of the areas of CSO activities. The report presents them accordingly.

4.1. Councils for civil society development

Establishment

In the Western Balkans councils on civil society exist in **Croatia**[28] and **Montenegro**. The first Council, namely the Council for Civil Society Development, was set up in Croatia in 2002. The Montenegrin Council for Cooperation between Governmental and Non-governmental Organisations was established in 2010 and became fully operational in 2011.

The Croatian Council was established based on the need to provide a legitimate platform for regular government/civil society interaction in shaping public policies. In Montenegro, the government's Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs envisaged the establishment of the Council *inter alia* to monitor the implementation of the strategy and the ensuing action plan.

Roles and responsibilities

Councils serve as ***advisory bodies to the government***. They don't have veto right over government's decisions but can initiate discussions on issues pertinent to civil society. Their main aim is to improve the legal, financial and institutional conditions for the sustainable development of CSOs and to strengthen the participatory role of CSOs in policy-making processes. More specifically, the responsibilities of the councils are as follows:

1) *Monitoring and analysis of public policies referring to or affecting civil society development and cross sector cooperation.*

The Croatian Council collaborates in: 1) planning priorities for the national programmes for public funding of programmes and projects of CSOs along with the analysis of annual reports of the ministries and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia about projects and programmes financed; and also in 2) monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy, in development of which council members also take part as members of working groups. In Montenegro, the council considers interim and annual reports of the state administration on cooperation with CSOs and the allocation of funds for projects involving CSOs, and reports to the government on the extent the cooperation has been achieved. In addition, it is expected to propose new areas for annual financing of CSOs.

2) *Playing a role in legislation impacting on civil society.*

Both the Croatian Council and the Montenegrin Council have a prominent role in influencing the legislative agenda pertinent to CSOs and providing input on draft laws impacting CSOs.

3) *Encouraging cooperation between the government and state administration bodies with CSOs.*

In Croatia the council also participated in programming and setting priorities for the use of pre-accession programmes and EU funds. It engaged in extensive consultations with CSOs as to what should be the funding priorities.

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28   Currently a process of evaluation of the work of the council is on-going, which may result in changes in the functioning of this body.

Composition

Since the councils are considered as cross-sector bodies, they consist of representatives of state bodies and CSOs. In both countries CSO members are representing different sectors of civil society while representatives of state bodies are delegated by various line ministries.

The Croatian Council has 29 members out of which 14 members are government representatives and 15 members are representatives of CSOs (12 representatives of associations, one representative of trade unions, nominated by the coordination of Trade Union Federations, one representative of employers' associations, nominated by the Croatian Union of Employers, as well as one representative of foundations). The members of the council are appointed for a three-year period. The Montenegrin Council consists of 13 government representatives and 12 representatives of CSOs.

In order to ensure legitimate representation of CSO members, they are elected by CSOs themselves through a public call and transparent procedure. In addition, the election criteria are geared to ensure CSO representation across the board. For example, in Croatia, CSOs vote for representatives of 12 different sectors of CSOs' activities, including promotion and protection of human rights; protection of health and improvement of the quality of life; disabled persons care; child care; protection of environment and sustainable development; social welfare; youth activism; democracy, rule of law and education; culture; organisations involved in homeland and veteran care; sports; and technical culture.[29]

Operation

The meetings of the Croatian Council take place at least every three months, while in Montenegro meetings of the council are held once in a month. In Croatia, members of the council perform their duties pro bono, while in Montenegro they receive compensation for their work, based on the government's decision. The offices for cooperation with NGOs in both countries provide logistical and technical support to the work of the councils. Both councils have to submit an annual report on their activities to the government.

4.2. *Other advisory bodies focusing on specific areas or issues*

In several countries there are other cross-sector bodies which are serving as consultative and advisory bodies on specific issues, including the protection of child rights, human rights, human trafficking, disabilities, volunteering, corruption and European integration. Some of those bodies engage in fruitful dialogue with stakeholders within their respective jurisdictions, while others are operating less effectively.

In **Albania**, the *National Council for the Protection of Children's Rights* was recently established by the government and the BKTF (United for Child Care and Protection) coalition was invited to have a seat. In addition, civil society is represented at the *National Referral Mechanism for the Enhanced Identification and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking,* which is considered a good example for cooperation.

In **Croatia**, CSOs' representatives sit in more than 100 advisory cross-sector bodies (committees, standing working groups) including the *National Board for the Development of Volunteerism*, which implements measures and activities with the purpose of promoting and further developing volunteerism. Such a body also operates in **Macedonia**.

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29   For more information on the nomination and election procedure, see: Emina Nuredinovska-Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans: "Criteria and procedures for selection of civil society organisations in cross-sector bodies". Skopje, 2011.

In **Kosovo** there is an *Anti-trafficking Inter Ministerial Group* established by the Prime Minister's Office in 2005. It consists of both governmental representatives and representatives of two CSOs. In addition, the Coalition of Disability Organisations initiated the establishment of the *National Council of People with Disabilities,* which consists of the representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, line ministry, the Office on Good Governance and the representatives of national organisations of people with disabilities. The council is meant to serve as a consultative and advisory body to the government and the parliament of Kosovo on issues pertinent to disabled persons (persons in need), seeking to include those issues in all the government's legislative initiatives. However, the greatest achievement of the council thus far has been its actual establishment, given the lack of concrete progress. In 2011 the National Council Against Corruption and the National Council on European Integration were established with the aim of fostering a broad consensus on how to tackle the issue of corruption and advance EU integration. The councils are operating under the auspices of the president with a broad range of stakeholders, including prominent CSOs. However, the influence of CSOs on the councils and the overall influence of these councils on issues pertinent to corruption and EU integration have been rather modest thus far.[30]

In **Turkey**, the Ministry of EU Affairs holds annual meetings with CSOs to consult on the EU accession process at the national level, and CSOs are included in the *Sectoral Monitoring Committee* that monitors and assesses government's efforts in the EU accession process. At local level, the EU offices under local governorships in 81 provinces established advisory councils, called EU advisory and steering committees, bringing together civil society representatives and public authorities to facilitate efforts towards EU accession.

As a most recent example, the *Turkish Human Rights Board*[31] was established in 2012 under the Prime Ministry with the mandate to promote human rights, monitor and evaluate implementation of its legal framework, receive complaints and initiate necessary procedures. The Human Rights Board is composed of 11 members out of which nine of the members can be proposed by CSOs from among human rights activists and human right experts. Significantly, these nine members will select two presidents, which head the council. One of the tasks of the council is to hold regular consultations with CSOs and public authorities on issues pertinent to human rights. The board reports its activities to the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights on an annual basis.

5.   Public foundations (agencies) for civil society development

As a result of a decline of foreign funding, which could not be compensated from other sources available (especially private support and income from economic activity), some countries, notably **Croatia** and **Albania**, chose to increase the level of public funds to CSO by creating distinct institutions with the primary mandate to provide financial support to CSOs.

Establishment

In **Croatia,** The **National Foundation for Civil Society Development** (National Foundation) was established in 2003, by the virtue of a separate law, and has played a crucial role in providing financial and capacity building support to CSOs ever since. It is considered the most innovative and successful model of public financing and capacity building to CSOs in the Central and Eastern European region. It has been built on years invested in the development of sound cooperation with CSOs, which was spearheaded by the government Office for Cooperation with NGOs and the Council for the Development of Civil Society. The National Foundation contributes to the development and implementation of

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30   Country report: Kosovo prepared by the Kosovar Civil Society Foundation for the regional civil society conference: FOR EUROPE OF THE WESTERN BALKANS, 26-28 September 2012, Zadar, Croatia.

31   http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/06/20120630-2.htm.

policies impacting on CSOs by determining priority areas and allocating funds for projects in those areas. The National Foundation has championed the model of decentralised public funding and local ownership through four regional foundations, which have been established since 2003. [32]

In 2009, **Albania** established the **Agency for Support of Civil Society** (Agency). At the time of its establishment, the financial sustainability of CSOs was jeopardised by the withdrawal of foreign donors. Recognising that state support was not sufficient at the time to meet the needs of CSOs and make up for the loss of outside support, the government, after extensive consultations with CSOs, established the Agency for Support of Civil Society. The establishment of the Agency was also a response to the recommendations on the implementation of the Copenhagen Criteria, which consider collaboration between governments and civil society as an important prerequisite of the accession process.

Sources of funding

The National Foundation is a public body, which is financed mainly from state budget and lottery proceeds;[33] these income sources represent 90-95% of the total income of the National Foundation. In addition, the National Foundation also generates income from private donations, economic activities, passive income from its endowment, and contributions from international institutions.

The Agency is a public entity, which is recognised as a separate item in the state budget. In order to secure the sustainability of the Agency, the law expressly stipulates that the annual funding secured from the state budget may not be smaller than the one of the previous year.

Composition

The two main bodies of the Croatian National Foundation are the Management Board and the Director. The Management Board consists of nine members out of which 4 represent state administration bodies (more specifically, ministries dealing with issues of education, finance and European affairs)[34], five represent organisations for civil society development and one representative of local self-governments. Members of the Management Board are appointed by the government with a term of four years and may be re-elected. The Director of the Foundation is appointed by the Management Board with a term of four years and may be re-elected, too. The National Foundation is organised in three departments, which are responsible for its day-to-day activities: the grants and programme development department; the international cooperation and communication department; and the finance, internal audit and service manager department.

The Agency is governed by the Supervisory Board, which approves its action plans, rules on conditions and procedures for the distribution of funds, the annual budget, and reports to the Council of Ministers on the activity of the Agency. The Supervisory Board consists of nine members elected for a period of four years: five members of the Supervisory Board are representatives of CSOs, while four members represent government institutions.[35] The Executive Director manages the activity and administration of the Agency and represents it towards third parties. It has a staff of 12 and consists of the directorate of strategic grants and regional development, the directorate of projects development, international cooperation and communication, and the sector of finance and internal audit.

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32 Istrian County: **Foundation for Partnership and Civil Society Development,** http://www.zaklada.civilnodrustvo-istra.hr/index.php?id=68; East Croatia: Foundation Slagalica, http://www.zaklada-slagalica.hr/eng/; Central Croatia: Foundation Zamah, http://www.zamah.hr/; South Croatia: Foundation Kajo Dadic, http://zaklada-dadic.hr/.

33 According to Law on Games of Chance and Competitions, which was adopted in 2002, 50% of proceeds from games of chance are allocated for CSO programmes, according to the criteria set out in a decree issued by the government each year. Out of this 50%, 14.10% is allocated for the development of civil society, the majority of which is distributed via the National Foundation. The rest of the money is distributed between different ministries to support sports, the needs of people with disabilities, combating drug use, social and humanitarian activities, culture, technical culture, extra-institutional learning, and child and youth development. In this way, the proceeds from lotteries are a constant and predictable income for the National Foundation.

34 Strategic Action Plan for 2008-2011.

35 Representatives of the institutions are selected by the Council of Ministers from among the institutions that have greatest interaction with NGOs.

6. Policy documents supporting civil society

Policy documents which aim to support the development of civil society and foster cooperation between the state and CSOs outline visions of the sector, highlight the role of CSOs in a democratic society, set out the framework and the principles of cooperation, as well as lay down the grounds and directions for future partnership and/or development of the sector. Specifically, they outline the results that they seek to accomplish, the list of specific measures and activities that need to be undertaken, including indicators to facilitate the monitoring of progress, and assign responsibilities to bodies of the state administration to ensure that the documents will be implemented and aims achieved within the set timeline.

Policy documents may take different form depending on the content and goals they want to achieve. This diversity is important, as they should reflect the local circumstances.

Policy documents in the European countries are usually the result of mutual efforts and negotiations between the two sides. As in other European countries, these documents in the Western Balkans appear as:

- *Bilateral documents*, also known as agreements or compacts, are policy documents between a state body and representatives of CSOs, which outline the goals and principles of cooperation and the responsibilities of both sides. They may deal with issues affecting the whole sector or part of the sector.

Such document exists in: **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (the Compact between the Council of Ministers of BiH and Civil Society), **Croatia** (Programme of Cooperation between the Government and the Non-Government, Non-For-Profit Sector in the Republic Of Croatia), and **Kosovo** (2007 Memorandum of Cooperation). What is common to all those documents is that they primarily set out general values and principles of collaboration which the parties adhere to, outlining areas where further action needs to be undertaken by both parties. In **Serbia**, notable examples include: the Memorandum of Collaboration between the government's Office for European Integration and CSOs, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and 150 CSOs; the Memorandum of Collaboration between the Ministry of Environment and 120 CSOs, and the Programme of Cooperation with CSOs in the Area of Development Assistance Planning, and in particular with programming and monitoring of the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance, 2011.

- *Unilateral documents*, also known as strategies, are documents adopted by a state body, which express commitments by one side only. These documents are also usually prepared with extensive input from CSOs.

The first documents for collaboration were adopted in 2007 in **Croatia** and **Macedonia**, and recently these countries adopted the second generation of those documents: the National Strategy for the Creation of an enabling Environment for Civil Society Development (2012-2016) in Croatia, and the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Sector (2012-2017) in Macedonia. The government's Strategy for Cooperation with Non-governmental Organisations in **Montenegro** was adopted in 2009 and the drafting of a new strategy is underway.

The Government of **Kosovo** has included the drafting of the Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society on its priority list as well. The draft of the strategy is currently open for comments and suggestions via e-consultation. The official process was initiated by the Secretary General of the Office of the Prime Minister in September 2011 and it is planned to be approved in autumn 2012. The draft document is based on the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the government and CSOs in November 2007, which was the first formal document that set out mutual commitments to institutional cooperation and genuine partnership between the two parties. The CiviKos Platform has been heavily involved

in the process of coordinating the drafting of the document and ensuring wide consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The process of finalising the strategy and preparation of the action plan proved to be more time consuming than originally anticipated and, as a result, the government's approval of the draft strategy is still pending.

The unilateral documents outline the principles for cooperation between the government and CSOs, address challenges in various areas of cooperation, as well as issues pertinent to operations of CSOs, such as: the institutional framework for cooperation, the legal framework for CSO and citizen participation, strengthening the role of CSOs in social and economic development, positioning CSOs in international initiatives. As a norm, policy documents are usually accompanied with an action plan/operational implementation plan for the implementation of the policy document.

Development of the policy documents

In the course of developing policy documents the following factors and conditions are usually considered: the needs of a society which call for cooperation between the government and CSOs in order for those needs to be addressed; the current state and practices of collaboration and areas which would benefit from further improvement; the current state of development of CSOs; areas in which CSOs' role as vehicle for citizens' voices and interests and a partner in meeting societal needs can be approved; and the critical assessment of the results accomplished since the adoption of a previous strategy (if such exists).

It is critical to develop a policy document in a participatory manner to ensure that it addresses real needs and creates ownership among the parties. In **Croatia**, the recent national strategy was developed by a working group composed of representatives of ministries and CSOs. For the purpose of informing, consulting and encouraging participation of civil society and interested public in the development of the strategy several public debates were organised at the outset of the process. In addition, the draft was developed by a working group, which engaged in broad consultations with the stakeholders as it embarked on finalising the draft strategy. The new **Macedonian Strategy** was also developed in a similar participatory fashion. In **Montenegro** the process of developing the (first) strategy was led by an "NGO Coalition", which was established in 2006 by CSOs across the board, which advocated for fostering a dialogue between the government and CSOs. It produced its own version of the government's Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs in 2006 in a participatory process involving more than 400 organisations. This strategy envisaged all institutional mechanisms for cooperation, which are now in place, and was subsequently fully integrated into the 2009 government's Strategy for Cooperation.[36]

Monitoring the implementation of the policy document

The implementation of policy documents is perhaps the most challenging aspect of the whole process. The legal nature of the document is important for implementation; if the document is binding it would generally have stronger guarantees for enforcement. However, examples of the countries, especially Croatia, show that equally important factors are the political commitment, participation and buy-in by the sector and the departments which will implement it.[37] In addition, the existence of the advisory bodies in Croatia and Montenegro has also supported implementation. Following on this lesson, the Macedonian Government also committed to establishing an inter-sectorial consultative body, which will monitor the implementation of the strategy and will have a broader mandate to generate initiative for further strengthening and promotion of the collaboration.

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36   TACSO Needs Assessment Report, Montenegro, Podgorica, 2011.
37   Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans: "European Practices on implementation of policy documents and liaison offices that support civil society development". ECNL and ICNL, 2009.

IV. RESEARCH ON INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND CSOs: CHALLENGES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Background information

As part of the Terms of Reference (*supra,* Chapter I.), ECNL conducted research which took a closer look at how the institutional mechanisms for cooperation between public institutions (government/parliament) and CSOs (*institutional mechanisms*) and policy documents on civil society (*policy documents*) have been developed and implemented in targeted countries. The underlying goal of the research was to gather information necessary to identify critical issues, trends and challenges pertinent to the institutional mechanisms of cooperation and policy documents on civil society, rather than to provide a detailed country-by country analysis in this respect. However, the research did gather a valuable body of information, which can be utilised if such an analysis proceeds in the foreseeable future. Consistent with its goal, the research was qualitative in nature, in that it targeted only a selected group of key stakeholders, government officials and CSO representatives alike in the countries concerned. In addition, staff of the delegations of the European Commission also provided valuable inputs to the research. The research focused on the state-level mechanisms of cooperation and policy documents, and was based on the questionnaire, which ECNL developed with the feedback provided by the TACSO Regional Office and TACSO Resident Advisers (*infra*, Annex II). TACSO Resident Advisers (RAs) played an instrumental role in selecting stakeholders and facilitating their completion of the questionnaires.

To ensure to the greatest extent possible that information gathered is not biased, which is an inherent risk with research involving government officials, in particular, respondents had an option to remain anonymous. However, the overwhelming majority of respondents chose to identify themselves. In addition, they were primarily selected as knowledgeable individuals, rather than representatives of their respective institutions and organisations. However, a number of respondents participated in the research as representatives of their respective institutions/organisations, acknowledged in Annex II of the report. To ensure a participatory process, TACSO RAs provided comments on the earlier versions of the report, including Chapter IV. In addition, they circulated the revised draft report among respondents to the questionnaire to get their feedback as to how their responses were incorporated in the report.

In order to process the information gathered in the appropriate context, ECNL developed a matrix of consolidated responses for each of the country concerned, which was closely patterned to the questionnaire. The information gathered was double-checked with RAs for their accuracy and, therefore, the information, which turned out to be wrong on facts was not part of the analysis. Legitimate differences among respondents, however, as to how those mechanisms operate in practice and what are their perceived successes and failures are duly taken into account.

2. Results of the research

2.1. *Institutional mechanisms and policy documents in place*

As detailed in Chapter III, all countries concerned, except Kosovo, have developed some general institutional mechanisms of cooperation or policy documents on civil society. However, efforts are also under way in Kosovo to move towards the establishment of a more structural dialogue and mechanism of cooperation with CSOs (*supra*, Chapter III).

As for the process of how those mechanisms came about, *there has not been a single, universal approach;* both approaches, from top-down and bottom-up are reported. Interestingly, why, at least in theory, the bottom-up approach is preferred in order to ensure wider recognition of all stakeholders and proper ownership. The top-down approach is not necessarily associated with the lack of ownership and recognition. For example, **Croatia**, which in many ways has played a pioneering and inspirational role in developing the institutional mechanisms of cooperation in the Southern Europe and beyond (*supra*, Chapter III), provides an example of a largely top-down approach with respect to the establishment of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs (Government Office) and the National Foundation for Civil Society (National Foundation). However, it is not reported to have impacted adversely on the perception of those institutions as genuine "allies" of civil society. One possible explanation for that, at least in the case of the National Foundation, is that while the idea to establish the National Foundation was spawned by the (then) head of the government office, it was well received among CSOs, which were fully engaged in a successful campaign leading up to the establishment of the National Foundation. On the other side, **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is an example of a country in which the top-down approach has yielded negative results in that CSOs to a large extent do not recognise the current institutional mechanism in place (the Department for Civil Society with the Ministry of Justice) as a genuine partner for cooperation.[38] **Montenegro** is an example of the successful bottom-up approach in that all institutional mechanisms of cooperation in place were developed at the initiative of CSOs (*supra,* Chapter III). The establishment of the Government of Serbia Office of Cooperation with Civil Society (Government Office) is another successful example of a bottom-up approach.

Importantly, regardless of how those institutional mechanisms came about, to the extent they were involved in the development of policy documents on civil society (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro), they pursued a participatory approach (*infra*, 2.2.).

2.2. *Major achievements*

The research revealed that *respondents recognise multiplied benefits* associated with institutional mechanisms for cooperation currently in place. Put in a logical frame, those benefits include: 1) educating government officials/parliamentarians about the role of CSOs in a democratic society, as well as educating governments/parliamentarians and CSOs about the opportunities the institutional mechanisms and policy documents present for civil society and citizen participation development; 2) creating a platform for structured dialogue of key stakeholders; 3) furthering CSO legal reforms; 4) fostering citizen participation in legislative processes; and, 5) increasing financial sustainability of CSOs.

Few respondents from Albania, BiH, Montenegro, and Serbia, respectively, could not identify any notable achievements of institutional mechanisms/policy documents in place. All respondents

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38 It is not clear from the responses received to what extent the generally negative attitude towards state institutions among certain categories of citizens in BiH has contributed to this negative perception.

belonging to this group noted that the introduction of those mechanisms/policy documents presents a relatively nascent development and thus more time is needed for their impact to be felt. In addition, few pointed to poor capacity as a contributing factor to the lack of notable successes (Albania, BiH, Montenegro, *infra* 3).

1) Educational and awareness role. In all the countries concerned which have some institutional mechanisms for cooperation in place, the educational and raising awareness role of those mechanisms features as a common denominator in the responses received. This perception is shared across the board, among government officials and CSOs. For example, several respondents from **Macedonia** noted that the establishment of the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs, despite on-going challenges, has nevertheless contributed to fostering partnership and building trust between the government/ parliament and CSOs. A number of responses indicated that the educational and awareness role of the institutional mechanisms in place pertains to government officials/parliamentarians, in particular. For example, a respondent from **Croatia** noted that: *"all of the mechanisms are useful mechanisms for educating government officials and parliamentarians about the role of CSOs in a democratic society"*. Similarly, a respondent from **BiH** noted that the institutional mechanism for cooperation at the state level (the Department for Civil Society with the Ministry of Justice) has broadened the horizons of government officials about the opportunities and the ensuing benefits of institutional cooperation with CSOs.

The educational role of the institutional mechanism in place features in lesser frequency in responses from **Albania**. Based on the responses received, this has to do with the fact that the overall focus of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (Agency) has been the provision of financial support to CSOs through its grants scheme, despite the fact that its mandate, at least on paper, also includes facilitating citizen participation and inter-sectorial cooperation.[39] A number of respondents also argued that the mandate of the Agency is too narrowly defined to enable it to play an awareness role. The recently drafted Strategy of the Agency (2012-2015) might bring about the necessary changes in this respect.

"An important achievement (of the establishment of the government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs, our remark), not easy to precisely measure though, is increased awareness among stakeholders about the need for cooperation and less confrontational attitude between the public sector and civil society; however, it is still work in progress".

Respondent from Montenegro

2) Platform for on-going dialogue. Respondents from a number of countries (Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro) noted that the institutional mechanisms for cooperation have created a platform for an on-going dialogue between public authorities and CSOs. This accomplishment is featured frequently in responses from Croatia, whereas several respondents from Serbia and Montenegro noted that those platforms need yet to be fully utilised. Respondents from **Croatia** identified several mechanisms in place, which either facilitated a dialogue (the Government Office, the National Foundation), or

"The activities of the Council have greatly contributed to the promotion of the concept of open and transparent governance. It does so by introducing a new dynamic into the policy-making processes in Croatia, thereby contributing to the quality of policy debates".

Respondent from Croatia

created a platform for such a dialogue (the government's Council for Civil Society). The frequencies of those responses in the case of Croatia have to do with the fact that the foregoing mechanisms of cooperation have been in place for some time (*supra*, Chapter III), which enabled those institutions to

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39   http://www.amshc.gov.al/ligji.php.htm.

create conditions and develop instruments necessary for such a dialogue to take place. In addition, respondents praised the leadership of those institutions for their vision and commitment, which were seen as instrumental in facilitating that dialogue.

3) Furthering CSO legal reforms. Respondents from the countries concerned, with the exception of BiH, provided evidence that the institutional mechanisms for cooperation have contributed to furthering CSO law reforms (CSOs framework regulation, CSO tax regulation, public funding of CSO, citizen participation, etc.). Respondents from **Albania** noted the role of the Agency in developing the Charter for Civil Society, a political document setting out a road map for CSOs legislative reforms, which was subsequently endorsed by the government, but is still pending before parliament. Respondents from **Croatia** pointed to the role of the Government Office and the Council for Civil Society, in particular, in creating an enabling legal and financial environment for CSOs. There is virtually no piece of CSO legislation or other legal instruments (code of good practices) enacted in Croatia in which those institutions are not recognised as playing a critical role. In **Macedonia**, the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs was involved in several legislative initiatives and plays a secretarial role to the commission in charge of granting public benefit status to CSOs. Respondents from **Montenegro** pointed to the role of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in drafting a 2011 NGO Law and pursuing other legal reforms pertinent to CSOs. Respondents from **Serbia** noted the role of the Government's Office in current efforts to create a more enabling legal environment for citizen participation in legislative processes.

As already noted, respondent from BiH did not recognise the role of the institutional mechanism in furthering CSO legal reforms. Although respondents did not further elaborate on this point, in the case of BiH, this can be attributed to the complex constitutional structure of BiH; limited jurisdiction of the state; and limited capacity of the Department for Civil Society.

The role of the strategy for civil society and other policy documents in furthering CSO legal reforms merits further consideration. In countries which have policy documents/strategies on civil society in place (Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro), respondents offered ample evidence that the enactment of those documents significantly impacted on CSO legal reforms. For example, respondents from **Croatia** credited the previous Strategy for Civil Society for the development of "*an enabling legal environment for CSOs and citizenship participation*". Similarly, respondents from **Macedonia** credited the previous strategy (2007-2011) for playing a critical role in the enactment of the new Law on Associations and Foundations, the Law on Voluntary Work, and the Code of Good Practices in Distribution of Public Funds and also the Code on Participation in Policy Making

Changes and improvements in the legal framework for CSOs largely occurred as a result of the government's Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society. If those were not identified therein as measures that needed to be taken, the legal framework for CSOs would not have been improved".

Respondent from Macedonia

Processes. In **Montenegro**, the 2009 government's Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs was credited, among others, for the establishment of the government's Council for Cooperation with NGOs in 2011. These findings are self-explanatory: the underpinning role of a strategy as a policy instrument, among others, is to outline issues which require legislative intervention, identify key stakeholders in that process, and set out a general time frame for those issues to be addressed. All of these are necessary ingredients for furthering legal reforms, in particular in cases in which the enactment of a strategy is preceded by a specific action plan, which is now a norm in the region.

4) Fostering citizen participation. Respondents from Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro specifically recognised the positive impact of the institutional mechanisms on citizen participation in legislative processes. Respondents from **Croatia** noted the role of the Council for Civil Society in

persuading the government to embrace the principles of openness, transparency, participation and accountability, and the role of the Government's Office in ensuring citizen participation in drafting legislation impacting on CSOs. A respondent from **Macedonia** noted that, "*the Law on Voluntary Work was adopted in an exceptionally participatory process*". Respondents from **Montenegro** pointed to the participatory process, which led to the enactment of the new NGO Law of 2011 and the role of the Government's Office therein. This included preparing a report on critical issues in the previous NGO Law; facilitating the formation of an inter-sectoral group, which was commissioned to prepare a draft law; and participating in public discussions on the draft law in several cities.

Policy documents on civil society also impacted positively on citizen participation. Respondents from countries which have strategies in place, Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro, respectively, noted that the enactment of civil society strategies in those countries was preceded by public discussions, which allowed for CSOs meaningful participation in the process, and that draft strategies were prepared by inter-sectorial working groups, to ensure proper ownership.

> "*The Government Office has already engaged in efforts to create a more enabling legal environment for citizen participation in legislative processes*".
>
> *Respondent from Serbia*

5) Improving CSOs financial sustainability. In a number of countries concerned, respondents specifically referred to the role of the institutional mechanisms for cooperation in supporting financial sustainability of CSOs. In **Albania**, a number of respondents noted the positive role of the Agency in contributing to a greater financial sustainability of CSOs, by providing additional sources of funding for CSOs. One respondent pointed to a large number of CSOs benefiting from those funds despite their modest size. However, while prevailing, this perception is not universally shared. For example, one respondent stated that: "*the majority of community based CSO do not recognise the Agency as a mechanism of support of civil society. They rather perceive it as a mechanism of the government to provide funds to CSOs closely linked with the government. The majority of local community CSOs do not even now that it exists as a structure*". On the other hand, in **Croatia**, respondents agree that, in words of one of them: "*sustainable system of public financing of CSOs is perhaps the greatest accomplishments of the institutional mechanisms for cooperation in place*". The National Foundation and its grant scheme is credited for this accomplishment, in particular. Respondents praised the National Foundation for its participatory process in selecting priority issues; for its decentralised mechanism of grants distribution which better cater to the needs of local communities; and for providing institutional grants for local CSOs, which are otherwise hard to come by. In **Macedonia**, as already noted, respondents credited the 2007-2011 Strategy on Civil Society for facilitating the development of a more transparent mechanism of public funds distribution to CSOs (the enactment of the Code on Public Grants Distribution) and the role of the Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs in the process of distribution. In **Montenegro**, which has multiplied mechanisms of institutional cooperation in place (*supra*, Chapter III), none of those mechanisms were specifically credited for contributing to the financial sustainability of CSOs, which is largely due to the fact that there is a separate inter-sectorial body (Commission) in charge of distribution of lottery proceeds to CSOs. In **Serbia**, one respondent noted that the Government's Office has played a role in efforts to create a more transparent mechanism of public funding of CSOs. Among others, the office prepared the annual Summary Report on the Budgetary Expenditures Relating to Associations and Other CSOs in 2011, which was presented in November 2012.

> "*The Agency has definitely contributed to a greater financial sustainability of CSOs*".
>
> *Respondent from Albania*

2.3. *Major challenges*

Respondents identified several major challenges in ensuring the fair and consistent implementation of the institutional mechanisms of cooperation and policy documents. Those challenges include: 1) the lack of political will; 2) the ill-conceived mandate and composition of the mechanisms in place; 3) the lack of capacity and resources; and, 4) focus on cooperation with large CSO and networks.

A respondent from **Kosovo** noted that, "advocating for having an institutional mechanism of cooperation in place would require as a pre-condition a more robust civil society". One respondent from **Turkey** neatly summarised a major challenge pertinent to the institutional mechanisms of cooperation there: *"the greatest challenge is the general lack of trust on both state/governmental officials and civil society activists. This lack of trust is fed by patronising approach of state and government, taking advantage of civil society participation by state actors to pursue their own agenda whenever it occurs (such as ad hoc consultation meetings on specific issues or occasions), and/or confrontation-based relationship adopted by both sides".* In **Serbia**, one respondent identified the need to ensure the on-going flow of information and exchange of knowledge between the government and CSOs, through both institutional and informal mechanisms, as a key challenge to ensure proper participation of CSOs in policy-making processes.

> *"Civil society is still underdeveloped in terms of its influence in policy-making".*
>
> *Respondent from Kosovo*

These challenges are discussed below.

1) A lack of political will. Respondents from all target countries, except Croatia, and particularly those from Albania, BiH, Macedonia, and Montenegro, perceive a lack of political will as a challenge and risk in the implementation of the institutional mechanisms of cooperation in place. This can be attributed to several factors: a) the frequent changes of governments/parliaments and inside governments which, in the environment of weak institutions lacking capacity and institutional memory, impact adversely on the previous commitments of the government/parliament towards civil society;[40] b) governments/parliaments still do not recognise fully the ensuing benefits of having those mechanisms in place; and 3) those mechanisms often came about as a result of outside political pressure rather than local ownership and, therefore, the commitment of public authorities in this respect is measured by and is dependent on the level of outside pressure exerted (infra, EU integration).

> *"Politicians still do not understand the concept of civil society and the ensuing benefits of cooperation with civil society".*
>
> *Respondent from BiH*

2) The Ill-conceived mandate and composition. These challenges are identified in BiH, Montenegro and once in Croatia, and have primarily to do with the place of those mechanisms in the overall structure of the government, rather than with its mandate. For example, respondents from **BiH** pointed to the fact that the Department for Civil Society is an integral part of the Ministry of Justice rather than a distinct body within the government, while a respondent from Montenegro noted that the Office for Cooperation is, *"only a part of the General Secretariat of the Government, which is an impediment for its better functioning, since its scope of work is incorporated into the overall responsibilities of the General Secretariat".*

3) A lack of capacity and resources. These challenges feature prominently in all the countries concerned, except in Croatia. In **Albania**, respondents from civil society seem particularly concerned with this issue. One respondent noted that that the Agency lacks *"both financial and human resources... and motivation to carry out its defined tasks and responsibilities".* Another respondent noted that the

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40   Except in the case of Montenegro, which has the longest serving government in the region.

lack of resources and capacity prevented the Agency from promoting good cooperation between state institutions and CSOs, which is *"sustainable and in public interest"*. The lack of capacity is also blamed for the Agency not being successful in generating funds from other sources (foreign aid agencies and private donors). Respondents from **BiH** and **Montenegro** noted the lack of capacity with the current mechanisms in place. This perception is shared by both government officials and CSOs, and can be attributed to some extent to the place of those mechanisms in the structures of the respective governments (*supra*, 2). A respondent from **Montenegro** also noted the lack of capacity of the contact persons with the line ministries responsible for cooperation with CSOs. This was attributed to their stretched responsibilities and frequent turnaround within the government. The lack of capacity and resources on the government's side was also noted with regard to the implementation of regulations governing citizen participation in legislative processes as well as the regulations governing cooperation between the state administration and CSOs. In **Croatia**, a lack of resources and capacity features sporadically in responses received, and only with regard to the Council for Civil Society.

A respondent from **Macedonia** noted that the Unit for Collaboration with NGOs (Unit) does not lack financial resources, however, its staffing is alleged to be problematic, due to its poor exposure to civil society issues: *"the people in the Unit are not from CSOs, they do not understand the sector, and are not being proactive"*.

As for the policy documents, in all the countries which have strategies for civil society in place (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro), a lack of financial resources to support the accomplishments of goals set out in those strategies is perceived as a major challenge.

4) Focus on cooperation with large CSOs. This challenge features prominently in all the countries concerned, except for Serbia,[41] and Croatia, and in particular in Albania, BiH, and Montenegro. There is a general perception that large CSOs and their networks stand to benefit most from the institutional mechanisms for cooperation, while small, endogenous CSOs are often overlooked. As a result, there is the perceived danger of monopolising channels of communication with the government by large CSOs, which impacts adversely on nurturing vibrant civil society. Significantly, this perception is shared among the government officials across the board and, to a somewhat lesser extent, among CSOs. A government official from **BiH** noted that: *"a big problem is a small core of big, elite, and well-resourced CSOs, which have pushed grassroots CSOs on the margin of this process"*. Similarly, a government official from **Montenegro** noted that, *"there is a perception that it is large CSOs operating from the capital which stand to benefit most from institutional mechanisms of cooperation in place, but this is our reality"*. This development can be attributed to twofold factors: the institutional mechanisms are meant, among others, to offer a structured dialogue between public institutions and CSOs, which in itself encourages and facilitate CSO networking; and, as noted above (*supra*, 3), those mechanisms often lack resources and capacities to reach out to local communities.

> *"It is mainly the poor outreach of local CSOs, overly focus on cooperation with large and well-resourced CSOs that operate in capital Tirana and/ or in other district centres. It is the core challenge when it comes to the implementation of the institutional mechanism of cooperation and policy documents".*
>
> *Respondent from Albania*

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41   This is also attributed to the fact that the Office for Cooperation became operational only in 2011 and is still in the inception phase of development.

2.4. *The impact of the processes of EU integration*

In all the counties concerned the EU integration processes *have impacted positively on the development* of at least some of the institutional mechanisms for cooperation currently in place and pertinent policy documents. This perception is shared among government officials and CSOs across the board. As several respondents pointed out, this has largely to do with the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership, which include democracy and by its extension a vibrant civil society and citizen participation. The practice of the European Commission to monitor the state of civil society and citizen participation in candidate countries when measuring quarterly progress of those countries towards full-membership is largely perceived to have provided a critical incentive for government/ parliament action in this respect.

A respondent from **Albania** noted that: *"It is a known fact that CSOs in the EU play a very much proactive role in nurturing greater cooperation with the government. Having this objective as a milestone, and taking into consideration the aspirations to be an EU member, both government and CSOs in Albania seek to meet the set standard in this respect".* Another respondent noted that, despite challenges, the process of EU integration played a very positive role in the establishment and operation of the Agency. Similarly, a respondent from **BiH** noted a positive impact of EU integration on increasing the capacity of the Department for Civil Society. A respondent from **Croatia** noted that EU integration, *"contributed only modestly to the process, as the major mechanisms (the Office, the National Foundation, and the Council for Civil Society our remark) were established before the process of integration got up to speed".* However, respondents noted the positive impact of EU integration on policy documents, specifically on the enactment of the National Strategy for Civil Society Development, *"which was a precondition for Croatia to use funds from the PHARE programme".* Respondents from Croatia also noted the role of EU integration in increasing the capacity of the institutional mechanisms in place. One respondent stated that two *"most important mechanisms"* (the Government's Office and the National Foundation) are in the process of strengthening their capacities (hiring additional staff) as they will become part of the European Social Fund Operating Structure. A respondent from **Montenegro** noted that the EU integrations have resulted in the government being more open to civil society, since one of seven priorities set out in the European Commission's opinion on the application of Montenegro for a full membership in EU is the government's cooperation with civil society. Respondents also noted that signing of the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Montenegro Parliament and CSOs in the Field of Democratisation and Human Rights was a result of the project funded by the EU. Respondents from Serbia credited the EU integration for signing the memorandum of cooperation between the government's Office for European Integration and CSOs, and for developing the mechanism of participation of CSO umbrella organisations in the IPA programming, in particular.

The positive impact of EU integration on government/parliament cooperation with CSOs is also felt in Kosovo and Turkey. Respondents from **Kosovo** noted that the EU integration process has influenced the government to consider changing its approach towards civil society, moving from ad-hoc and non-transparent interaction with civil society to a more formal and structured cooperation. One respondent cited the EC Progress Report for Kosovo 2011, which states that *"there is no institutional platform that would allow for a regular dialogue between parliament and civil society organisations",* which resulted in parliament being more open towards civil society and proceeding with the establishment

"In the beginning, the EU had an important role, but now Turkey does not have the same motivation to be a member of the EU as it used to".

Respondent from Turkey

of a distinct unit for cooperation and dialogue with civil society. The first results of those efforts are expected this year, although no significant strides have been made thus far. Respondents from **Turkey** also credited the EU for its efforts to encourage the government to open up to civil society; however, they also noted the fading influence of the EU in this respect.

2.5. *The impact on EU integration*

There is evidence presented that *institutional mechanisms of cooperation support the EU integration process*. In **Albania** participants noted the role of the Agency, rather limited though, in educating citizens about the ensuing benefits of EU integration and providing grants to projects which reflect the country's priorities with regard to EU integration. In **Croatia** the role of the institutional mechanisms in place is recognised with regard to raising CSO awareness and promoting policy dialogue on issues pertinent to EU integration; programming and distributing EU funds for civil society; and, increasing capacities of CSOs to absorb those funds. In **Macedonia**, the Unit for Collaboration with NGOs is noted to have a modest role in the EU integration processes. Part of the reason for that is that there is a separate body, the National Council on European Integration, in the parliament described above. In **Montenegro**, the 2009 government's Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs envisages an increased role of CSOs in the process of EU integrations and identifies six capacity-building measures in this respect. A role of the government's Council for Cooperation with NGOs in the development of the Action Plan for Monitoring the Implementations of the EU Commission's Recommendation is also noted. In

Serbia, the Memorandum of Collaboration between the government's Office for European Integration and CSOs sets out an institutional framework for CSOs to be included in raising awareness and policy dialogue on EU integration issues. In addition, the Government's Office is also noted to have engaged in efforts to increase the capacity of CSOs to participate in a policy dialogue in this respect.

> *"The Government Office and the National Foundation have promoted a policy dialogue on issues pertinent to EU integration".*
>
> *Respondent from Croatia*

2.6. *The impact on cooperation between public authorities and CSOs*

The research provides some evidence of the positive impact of the institutional mechanisms of cooperation with regard to the openness of public authorities towards cooperating with CSOs. However, given that, in most cases, those mechanisms have been recently introduced, it will take some time before more conclusive evidence can be presented in this respect. This is reflected in a response from **Albania,** which states that, *„given the short life and limited capacities of the Agency its impact as the main institutional mechanism is relatively positive".* A respondent from Croatia noted that, *"they (the institutional mechanisms, our note) have without doubt impacted positively on cooperation between the government, line ministries and CSOs".* As a result, an increasing number of laws and policy documents are being developed in close cooperation with CSOs whose representatives are often included in government/parliament's working groups and advisory bodies. A respondent from **Macedonia** noted that, thus far, the Unit for Collaboration with NGOs has primarily focused on creating a better regulatory environment for CSOs, and that it has to focus more on facilitating cooperation between CSOs and line ministries. Several respondents from **Montenegro** noted that institutional mechanisms in place contributed to better education of government officials/parliamentarians on the ensuing benefits of such cooperation and on building trust between the government and civil

society. However, this perception is not universally shared. Another respondent pointed to the positive impact of the regulation governing cooperation of the state administration and CSOs in that it significantly facilitated the transparent appointment of CSO representatives in the working groups commissioned by the government to draft laws and other policy instruments. This process has led to the *"increased quality of approved public policies and has facilitated the appointment of CSO representatives in the*

> *"There is a concern that the establishment of institutional mechanisms of cooperation might have an adverse impact on cooperation between the line ministries and CSOs".*
>
> *Respondent from Macedonia*

government's working group for the preparation of the accession talks with the EU". Respondents from **Serbia** noted efforts of the Government's Office for Cooperation in educating government officials on the ensuing benefits of citizen participation in public policy processes, which has already resulted in increased cooperation between line ministries and CSOs.

On the other hand, the research also revealed a potentially adverse impact of institutional mechanisms on public authorities/CSO cooperation, which is partially reflected in the foregoing response from **Macedonia**: that the establishment of general institutional mechanisms of cooperation may also serve as an excuse of line ministries not to engage in such cooperation.

2.7. *Monitoring the implementation*

Several countries (Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro) have tools to monitor the implementation of the institutional mechanisms and policy documents in place. Referring to the significance of those mechanisms, a respondent from **Albania** noted that, *"due to the lack of monitoring tools there is no transparent process about the criteria of selection, the implementation of the projects and the overall activities of the Agency".* In **Croatia**, the annual report of the National Foundation must be approved by parliament, while the Government's Office monitors the implementation of the Strategy for Civil Society and other pertinent policy documents (Code on Citizen Participation, Code on Good Practices in Public Financing of CSOs). Similarly, in **Macedonia** the Unit for Collaboration with NGOs oversees the implementation of the Strategy for Civil Society. One respondent also noted several "shadow reports", which are prepared by CSOs and which are pertinent to institutional mechanism and policy documents, but argued that, *"the way forward is to include civil society representatives in an independent, cross-sectorial monitoring body".* In **Montenegro**, the government's Council for Cooperation with NGOs is responsible for the implementation of the strategy, as well as monitoring the implementation of other policy documents pertinent to CSOs. Towards this end, it submits a report to the government on the implementation of the strategy, a report on its own work as well as a report on the collaboration of public institutions with CSOs.

> *"The government's Council for Cooperation with NGOs plays a key role in the implementation of the Strategy and other policy documents pertinent to CSOs".*
>
> *Respondent from Montenegro*

2.8. *Steps to improve the mechanisms in place*

Respondents identified a number of steps to improve the implementation of the current institutional mechanisms. In **Albania**, as far as CSO respondents are concerned, those are neatly summarised by a respondent who suggests that, *"the mandate of the Agency needs to be improved, with a view to consolidate the capacities and outreach thereof."* Several measures are suggested in this respect. 1) *Foster the mediation role of the Agency* with a view to increase cooperation of state institutions with CSOs. 2) Assist the Agency to *develop alternative mechanisms of cooperation at the local level*. 3) *Improve the CSOs legislation* with a view to enable CSO sustainability. 4) The Agency's board members *should adopt a broader spectrum of interaction with CSOs*. Instead of simply providing grants they should also be involved in development of policy framework governing civil society. 5) *Increase capacities* of civil society at a macro level, and other related concepts (organisational development, strategic planning and management, fundraising and revenue generation, etc.). 6) *Be more accountable and responsible to the needs and constraints the civil society is facing* in the country related to *unfavourable legal and fiscal framework* for CSOs. 7) *Expand communication and interaction with other institutions supporting civil society* either at national or international level. 8) *Be acquainted with and benefit from the best practices* of development of similar institutions operating in the Western Balkan countries. Another

respondent, a government official, pointed to the efforts the Agency has already taken to increase its outreach to local communities i.e. the field visits in all 12 districts to familiarise CSOs with application rules and procedures for the Agency's grant scheme.

In **BiH** respondents noted the need to increase pressure on politicians and get them agree on functional mechanisms of cooperation. The need for continued education of key stakeholders on the ensuing benefits of such cooperation is also noted. Given significant frictions among major political parties on fundamental political issues, however, this is bound to be an uphill battle.

In **Croatia**, in addition to the need to invest more in on-going education of key stakeholders, respondents identified several other general steps which need to be undertaken, including investing more time and resources in capacity building of CSOs and their platforms in order for them to play a meaningful role in cooperation and in developing more effective monitoring mechanisms, indicators and bench marks to monitor the implementation of those mechanisms. As for specific steps, one respondent noted the need for the Council for Civil Society to be more transparent and improve its channel of communication with CSOs.

In **Macedonia**, respondents noted several steps that need to be taken: 1) upgrade the status of the Unit for Collaboration with NGOs within the government's structure, in order to gain more independence and preferably its own budget; 2) increase the outreach of the Unit outside the capital; 3) improve communication among civil servants responsible for the implementation of the strategy; 4) establish the Council for Civil Society as the government's inter-sectorial advisory body, which will also be charged with monitoring the implementation of the strategy for civil society; 5) improve the capacity of key stakeholders in order to ensure the full implementation of the institutional mechanisms in place.

In **Montenegro**, respondents also recognised several steps that need to be taken. Some of them reflect the foregoing responses from Macedonia: 1) define the mandate of the Government's Office more precisely, upgrade its position within the government's structure and allocate a separate budget for the Office; 2) increase the capacity of the government's officials (particularly those in senior positions) and CSOs to ensure proper implementation of the mechanisms in place; 3) ensure on-going monitoring and evaluation of the mechanisms in place, in order to determine what steps need to be taken (including the revision of their mandate and composition) in order to ensure their proper functioning; 4) ensure proper budget allocation of resources necessary to support operations of the Council for Civil Society.

In **Serbia**, respondents identified the following steps that need to be taken: 1) the enactment of the government's strategy for civil society, which will *inter alia* identify issues pertinent to citizen participation which need further legislative reforms, as well continued work on an enabling legal and financial environment for CSOs; 2) building capacity of key stakeholders (government officials/parliamentarians and CSOs) to fully utilise the mechanisms of cooperation.

In **Kosovo**, respondents identified two steps pertinent to the establishment of the institutional mechanisms of cooperation: 1) set up a unit/department with the Office of the Prime Minister for cooperation with CSOs. Setting up the unit/department with the Prime Minister's Office is deemed necessary because of its *"central role in overall coordination of law and policies"* which would ensure a smooth execution of the coordination and monitoring role of the unit/department; and 2) invest in capacity building of key stakeholders.

> *"There needs to be a unit/ department with the Office of the Prime Minister in charge of cooperation with CSOs, and more needs to be invested in the capacity of key stakeholders".*
>
> *Respondent from Kosovo*

In **Turkey**, participants pointed out that there needs to be a public debate on whether it would be justified to introduce a general mechanism of institutional cooperation with CSOs. In relation with that, they also noted the need for legislation, which would enable a larger role for CSOs in the decision-making process.

2.9. *Examples of best practices*

Respondents from several countries reported examples of best practices with regard to the development and implementation of the institutional mechanisms and policy documents in place. A respondent from **Croatia** pointed to the *National Foundation and its regional decentralisation model of financing*, which is geared towards providing support to small, grassroots organisations and community foundations, as an example of good practices to follow. Respondents from **Macedonia** noted the participatory process, which led to the enactment of the *Strategy of the Government for Collaboration with the Civil Sector*, which ensured that CSOs are part of the working group responsible for drafting the strategy and work together with responsible line ministries in that process. The strategy was also discussed at the National Council on European Integration in the parliament and CSO were broadly consulted. A respondent from **Montenegro** noted the *inclusion of CSO representatives in several government working groups commissioned to prepare negotiations for Montenegro's accession to the EU*. Three CSO representatives are member of the working group responsible for Chapter 23 (judiciary and basic human rights) and two CSO representatives are included in the working group responsible for Chapter 24 of the negotiations (justice, freedom and security). A respondent from **Serbia** noted that, during the annual revision of the *Sectoral Civil Society Organisation Mechanism* (SECO), in April 2012, it was decided to continue with the development and strengthening of the networks of CSOs around SECO, as well as to increase their capacity in the area of IPA planning and programming, in particular. A respondent from **Kosovo** noted that *amendments to the Law of Associations* and *the start of the process of drafting the cooperation strategy* between the government and civil society might be distinguished as important first successful steps.

> *"The National Foundation is a good example by itself, but here I would like to stress the regional decentralisation that the National Foundation has accomplished by creating partnerships with regional coalitions of NGOs with the mission of providing support to grassroots CSOs and with local foundations on the mission of financial decentralisation".*
>
> *Respondent from Croatia*

V. RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATION/POLICY DOCUMENTS IN PLACE

Based on the outcome of the research conducted, as well as the recommendations and outcomes from the regional conference, *"Keeping up the Momentum: Improving Cooperation Between Public Institutions and CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey"*, which TACSO hosted in Skopje on November 7-8, 2012, the following general recommendations for key stakeholders (government officials, parliamentarians, CSOs) can be extracted to improve the implementation of the current mechanisms/ policy documents in place.

Recommendation 1:   *Make sure that conditions necessary for the proper implementation of the institutional mechanisms are met.*

In order to be successful, the institutional mechanisms of cooperation and, in particular, the government's offices/units/departments for collaboration with CSOs, depend on the following factors,

- A clear mandate;
- A proper place in the government's/parliament's structure;
- Sufficient and, preferably separate, funding line;
- Committed leadership;
- Competent staff.

Only with these conditions fulfilled can the mechanisms can yield the desired results.

Recommendation 2:   *Develop proper tools to monitor the implementation of institutional mechanisms.*

There is a need to develop tools to monitor the implementation of the institutional mechanisms in place in order to ensure their on-going assessment, similar to those which already exist with regard to the implementation of the pertinent policy documents. It does not necessarily require the development of a new monitoring tool, but rather the utilisation of those already in place, if any.

Recommendation 3:   *Engage in capacity building.*

On-going capacity building of key stakeholders (government officials, parliamentarians, CSOs) is the key for the establishment and proper functioning of the institutional mechanisms for collaboration. The development of common methodology, benchmarks, and outcomes of capacity building efforts would facilitate this process in countries in the Region.

Recommendation 4:   *Make sure the institutional mechanisms do not overlap in their mandate and structure.*

Having more than one institutional mechanism in place may impact positively on civil society development; however, it may also pose a challenge and give rise to the issue of overlapping responsibilities and high transactional costs of implementation of those mechanisms.

Recommendation 5:   *Make sure that government responsibility for collaboration with CSOs does not end with the establishment of institutional mechanisms.*

Measures need to be taken to ensure that having an institutional mechanism of collaboration in place does not relinquish other government officials or parliament from their responsibilities for collaboration with CSOs. Institutional mechanisms do not supplant the need for on-going citizen participation in public policy which goes beyond the mechanisms in place. Those mechanisms create conditions for a more sustained partnership with CSOs. However, it is essential that a mechanism is properly implemented and periodically reviewed in order to allow for necessary adjustments.

Recommendation 6:   *Reach out to grassroots CSOs.*

There is the perceived need for the institutional mechanisms of cooperation to reach out to small, community, grassroots CSOs and to focus more on increasing their capacity to engage in policy dialogue. Larger CSOs and their networks can significantly contribute to addressing those needs.

Recommendation 7:   *Utilise the impact of EU integration.*

EU integration provides a significant incentive for nurturing government/CSO collaboration in creating a platform for broad social dialogue about the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the full membership in the EU. This requires the government to invest more in capacity building of and facilitating the dialogue with CSOs as the "voice of the people", and in supporting their networking.

Recommendation 8:   *Ensure that policy documents for civil society development are realistic and evidence based.*

Given the competing government priorities and stretched resources, there needs to be vigorous public debate and consultations among key stakeholders to ensure objective assessments of the goals that the policy documents pertinent to civil society seek to accomplish so that they are evidence based. General policy documents on civil society do not supplant sectoral documents, which outline the role of CSOs in particular areas of public interest, but rather they are complementary.

Recommendation 9:   *One solution does not fit all.*

In countries which do not have institutional mechanisms in place, or have such mechanisms in rudimentary forms, there needs to be a vigorous debate across the board about the perceived benefits, challenges, risk and costs associated with having those mechanisms in place before proceeding with any further steps in that direction. Country models need to be based on country needs assessments, and therefore it is incumbent on the local stakeholders to identify mechanisms which will best suit the local context.

Recommendation 10:   *Encourage regional experience sharing.*

As the current experience clearly suggests, there are multiplied benefits associated with keeping open the channels of regional experience sharing with regard to the implementation of the institutional mechanisms for collaboration. Among others, this allows stakeholders from countries in the region to learn from each other, share best practices and challenges in the implementation of those mechanisms, launch common initiatives as to how to improve those mechanisms, and generally establish a productive working relationship, which ultimately contributes to establishing a better relationship among those countries.

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Useful links:

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- National Foundation for Civil Society Development in Croatia: http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr.
- Council for Civil Society Development in Croatia: http://www.uzuvrh.hr/stranica.aspx?pageID=38.
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- Department of Registration and Liaison with NGOs in Kosovo: http://map.rks-gov.net/sq/.
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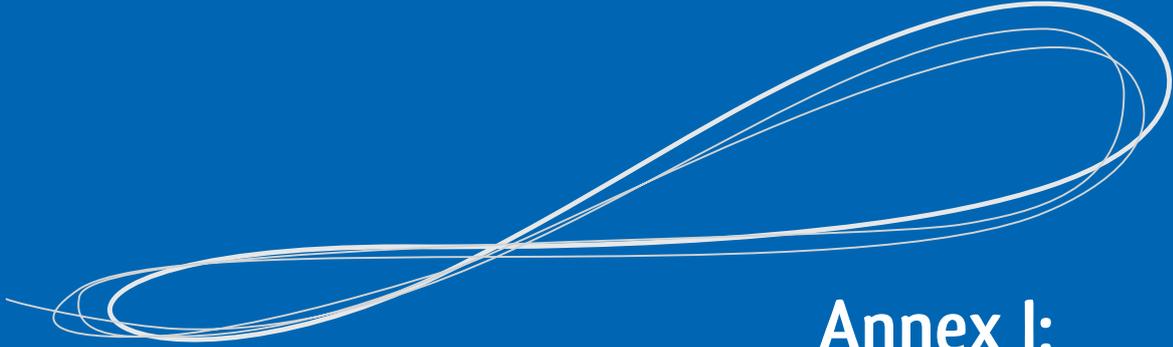
Annex I:
Questionnaire sent to respondents

Introduction: The Meaning of Major Terms Used in the Questionnaire

The term: *institutional mechanism for collaboration between the government/parliament and civil society organisations* (CSO) refers to a distinct government/parliament's body or a designated person with the government/parliament whose primary mandate is to nurture and support collaboration between the government/parliament and civil society organisations (CSO), as defined by pertinent laws, regulations or decisions. This may include, but is not limited to, the following: the government's office for collaboration with CSOs; the government's council on civil society, or similar cross-sector advisory bodies, contact persons with various line ministries, or with parliament; public foundations for civil society, etc.

The term: *informal mechanism of collaboration* refers to good practices of collaboration between the government/parliament and CSOs, which are not necessarily regulated by law or any other legal instruments, but are rather developed despite the lack of a particular legal instrument governing such collaboration. For example, regular consultations with environmental protection CSOs, introduced by a competent ministry despite the fact that such consultations are not mandated or prescribed by law.

The term: *policy document* refers to the government's strategies for civil society or other strategies and policy documents (compact, memorandum of understanding, code of citizen participation in public policy, etc.) dealing with the enabling environment for CSOs.

1) **Is there any state-level institutional mechanism of collaboration between the government and CSOs or a policy document on civil society in your country?**

   a) the government's office for collaboration with CSOs; b) the government's council on civil society or other advisory bodies; c) contact person with the line ministries; d) contact person with parliament; e) national foundation for civil society; f) state level compact on cooperation between the government/parliament and CSOs; g) state level strategy of cooperation between government/parliament and CSOs; h) strategy for civil society development; i) others *(please specify)*.

2) **Please specify when those mechanisms and policy documents have been developed, and briefly explain the underlying reasons for the establishment of the mechanisms of collaboration or development of the policy documents.**

3) **What was the process leading up to the establishment of the institutional mechanism and policy documents?**

4) **What are the perceived greatest achievements of the institutional mechanism of collaboration and policy documents thus far**?

5) **What are the perceived greatest challenges in the implementation of the institutional mechanism of collaboration and policy documents**?

6) **What role, if any, has the process of EU integration played in the establishment and operation of the institutional mechanism of collaboration in place?**

7) **What role has the institutional mechanism of collaboration has played in EU integration?**

8) **Have the institutional mechanism of collaboration and policy documents impacted positively or adversely on cooperation between the government, parliament, line ministries and CSOs or has the impact has been insignificant?**

9) **Is there a tool or model in place to monitor the implementation of the institutional mechanism of collaboration and policy documents?**

10) **What steps need to be undertaken to ensure a better functioning of the current institutional mechanism of collaboration and policy documents in place?**

11) **For countries which do not have a particular institutional mechanism of collaboration or policy documents in place that the civil society may have wanted to have, what are the main reasons why such a mechanism or policy documents have not been introduced?**

12) **Are there any informal mechanisms of collaboration (good practices) between the government/parliament and CSOs in the absence of the institutional mechanisms of collaboration or, for that matter, in addition to the institutional mechanism of collaboration?**

13) **What would be the best example of successful cooperation as a result of any of institutional or informal mechanisms of collaboration in your country, which you feel should be shared with others?**

Annex II:
Respondents to the questionnaire

	Name and surname	Institution/organisation
	ALBANIA	
1	Genci Pasko	TACSO Albania Office
2	Olsi Dekovi	Council of Europe
3	Rudi Bobrati	Agency for the Support of Civil Society
4	Eleni Jajcari	Me the Woman Association
5	Entela Lako	UNDP Albania
6	Mihallaq Qirjo	REC- Regional Environmental Centre
7	Petrit Dobi	RASP - Rural Association Support Programme
8	Sinan Tafaj	Association of Blind People
9	Fabiola Laco	Useful to Albanian Women
10	Ermelinda Mahmutaj	EDEN Centre
11	Jonuz Kola	ALB -AID Kukes
12	Adriana Kasa	Tjeter vizion Elbasan
13	Eriza Yzeiraj	World Vision
14	Altin Hazizaj	CRCA - Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania
15	Gent Puto	European Centre
16	Edlira Cepani	Women Network
17	Danjela Collaku	Transparency International Albania

	Name and surname	Institution/organisation
	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	
1.	Slavica Drašković	TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina Office
2.	Ranka Ninkovic Papic	Fondacija za socijalno uključivanje u BiH
3.	Amra Seleskovic	VESTA
4.	Elizabeta Lukacevic	Biro za ljudska prava Tuzla
5.	Sanja Stanic	VIKTORIJA
6.	Miodrag Dakic	Centar za zivotnu sredinu
7.	Suvad Zahirovic	IC LOTOS
8.	Milena Savic	CIPP
9.	Niko Grubesic	Ministarstvo pravde BiH
10.	Dzemal Hodzic	Delegation EU to BiH
11.	Sadeta Skaljic	Minstarstvo pravde BiH
	CROATIA	
1.	Aida Bagić	TACSO Croatia Office
2.	Nikša Alfirević	Faculty of Economics Split
3.	Mario Bajkuša	Forum for Freedom in Education
4.	Sandra Benčić	Centre for Peace Studies
5.	Milan Bijelić	Association MI
6.	Daniela Jovanova Ivanković	Green action
7.	Branka Kaselj	Community Foundation Slagalica
8.	Željka Leljak Gracin	Green Action
9.	Slađana Novota	SMART - Association for Civil Society Development
10.	Sandra Pernar	Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs
11.	Lejla Šehić Relić	Volunteer Centre Osijek
12.	Nikolina Svalina	Independent Expert
	KOSOVO	
1.	Ardita Metaj-Dika	TACSO Kosovo Office
2.	Taulant Hoxha	Kosovar Civil Society Foundation
3.	Afrim Maliqi	HANDIKOS
4.	Valdete Idrizi	CIVIKOS Platform PVPT Centre
5.	Hamijete Dedolli	Centre for Protection of Victims and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings
6.	Leon Malazogu	Democracy for Development
7.	Bekim Blakaj	Humanitarian Law Centre
8.	Veton Mujaj	Syri i Vizionit
9.	Alban Muriqi	Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims
10.	Shqipe Pantina	Centre for Policy and Advocacy

	Name and surname	Institution/organisation
MACEDONIA		
1.	Suncica Sazdovska	TACSO Macedonia Office
2.	Suzana Nikodijevic Filiposka	General Secretariat of the Government
3.	Suncica Sazdovska	TACSO Macedonian Office
4.	Emina Nuredinoska	Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation
5.	Boris Sarkovski	Foundation for Local Community Development, Stip
6.	Igor Tasevski	Centre for Civic Initiatives, Prilep
7.	Zoran Ilieski	Youth Coalition SEGA
8.	Tanja Hafner Ademi	Balkan Civil Society Development Network
MONTENEGRO		
1.	Goran Djurović	TACSO Montenegro Office
2.	Aleksandar Perović	NGO Ozon
3.	Aleksandra Gligorović	NGO Association for Democratic Prosperity
4.	Danka Latković	Government Office for Cooperation with CSOs
5.	Ljupka Kovačević	NGO Anima
6.	Mikan Medenica	NGO Natura
7.	Petar Djukanovic	NGO Centre for Civic Education
8.	Ana Novakovic	Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations
9.	Marina Vujačić	Association of Disabled Youth of Montenegro
10.	Milan Šaranović	Centre for Antidiscrimination "Ekvista"
11.	Marko Sošić	Institute Alternative
SERBIA		
1.	Zorica Rašković	TACSO Serbia Office
2.	Milena Banovic	Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society
3.	Milica Markovic Tomic	Serbia European Integration Office
4.	Gorana Odanovic	CSO Belgrade centre for security policy
5.	Vesna Piperski Tucakov	Provincial Secretary for Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government
6.	Dejan Milosevic	CSO Protecta
7.	Jasmina Mikovic	CSO Praxis
8.	Endre Balasa	Municipality of Backa Topola
9.	Ivan Grujic	CSO Educative Centre
10.	Dubravka Velat	CSO Civic Initiative

	Name and surname	Institution/organisation
	TURKEY	
1.	Neslihan Ozgunes Oktem	TACSO Turkey Office
2.	Mustafa Yardımcı, Özer Kaya (Focus Group Meeting)	Department of Associations, Ministry of Interior
3.	Yasin Yılmaz, Nazmi Cihat Gök (Focus Group Meeting)	EU and External Affairs Department, Ministry of Interior
4.	Ege Erkoçak, Gürhan Demirel, Sinem İçöz (Focus Group Meeting)	Political Affairs and Project Management Departments, Ministry of EU Affairs
5.	Günal Seyit (Focus Group Meeting)	YASADER – Legislative Association
6.	Ali Maskan (Focus Group Meeting)	TIKA – Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency of Prime Ministry
7.	Kazım Çavuşoğlu (Focus Group Meeting)	Department for Political Affairs with Balkan Countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8.	Ersin Kaya (Focus Group Meeting)	Ministry of Family and Social Policy
9.	Deniz Göle (Focus Group Meeting)	Ministry of Development
10.	Gazali Çiçek, Mesut Aşçı (Focus Group Meeting)	Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, Prime Ministry
11	Basak Ersen	TUSEV

ANEX III - ALBANIA

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Albania – Klodjan Seferaj (Department of Strategy & Donor Coordination, DSDC) Diana Culi (Independent Forum of NGOs), Envina Xhemi (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports), Nertil Guri (Albanian Blind Association), Aferdita Selimaj (Public Albanian Radio and Television/ Radio, Tirana).

Background Note: The Albanian Government has recently undertaken a range of important initiatives aiming at encouraging and consolidating of cooperation with civil society to benefit the European integration process of the country.

In 2009, as an outcome of a two-year, GTZ-funded project to strengthen government support for and cooperation with civil society, the Government of Albania established the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS). In this framework, the drafting of the political document on the cooperation between the government and civil society, namely Civil Society Charter, has been a product initiated by the government, in close cooperation with civil society. The drafting of the charter has passed through a long consultation process and has obtained the consensual approval and involvement of more than 230 organisations from all around Albania during eight regional and national meetings that have been organised for this purpose.

This document represents a highly significant platform for cooperation between the government and civil society laying down the principles and mechanisms of cooperation and institutionalisation of this relation on reciprocity basis. It is intended to regulate CSO/government relations. It is now made public on the website of the ACSC to be used by all CSOs that might refer to it for various issues. But this political document sets out a road map for CSO legislative reforms, which was subsequently endorsed by the government, is pending before the parliament.

Commitment   No. 1

The participants in this workshop commit to facilitate the process of endorsement of the Civil Society Charter to pass in the parliament by November 2013.

Focal point: DSDC

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Department of Strategy & Donor Coordination/Council of Ministers Parliamentarians NGO Coalitions Media	To obtain a realistic and objective result	This is an on-going process and these actors are already part of it. We shall keep the momentum going through lobbying, information, etc.

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reminding and raising awareness of institutions and parliamentarians of the necessity to push the process forward and have the charter adopted	CSOs, DSDC	•	•										
Roundtables	CSOs, DSDC			•	•	•	•	•					
Lobbying with parliamentarians	CSOs, DSDC		•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Albania – Klodjan Seferaj (Department of Strategy & Donor Coordination, DSDC) Diana Culi (Independent Forum of NGOs), Envina Xhemi (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, MTKRS), Nertil Guri (Albanian Blind Association), Aferdita Selimaj (Public Albanian Radio and Television/ Radio, Tirana).

Background Note: The action plan is to approve in the parliament the draft law on social enterprises, proposed by the coalition of Albania NGOs that have worked on this issue and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Albania. This law, elaborated and reviewed from the gender perspective, is very important for the development of the social business sector in Albania.

Commitment   **No. 2**

The participants in this workshop commit to: undertake consultations from the gender perspective with CSOs and line ministries on all legislation starting with the Law on Social Enterprises, Sectorial Employment Strategies and Labour Code by November 2013.

Focal point: Djana Culi

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Women's Coalitions Ministry of Labour, Social Affair and Equal Opportunities	Because they are the experts in the field	Through meetings, providing recommendations and concrete actions disseminated to all interested stakeholders

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Analyses of existing legislation	Women Coalitions	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Dissemination to all stakeholders of recommendations from the gender perspectives for the respective legislation	Women Coalitions, Ministry of Labour, Media										•	•	•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Organisations from Turkey are interested in sharing information and experience on social entrepreneurship	Sharing of experience	Partnership
There are women's coalitions in Europe that have supported such a process before and will also provide support	Technical assistance expertise	Already in partnership with the Albanian women's coalitions

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Albania – Klodjan Seferaj (Department of Strategy & Donor Coordination, DSDC) Diana Culi (Independent Forum of NGOs), Envina Xhemi (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, MTKRS), Nertil Guri (Albanian Blind Association), Aferdita Selimaj (Public Albanian Radio and Television/Radio, Tirana).

Background Note: The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (MTKRS) has already initiated the process of reviewing the existing National Youth Strategy and is following the process. In order to achieve best results, there is a need to have a wider consultation process with all stakeholders, especially youth CSOs. In this view, the revision of the strategy will entail preparation of the Youth Law that is a necessity for all youth CSOs. In this framework, as the process has already started, the TACSO Albania Office is supporting and facilitating the process. Moreover the process will lay the groundwork for the initiation of the new National Strategy 2013- 2020, and the review procedures will be similarly used for the drafting of the new strategy.

Commitment   **No. 3**

The participants in this workshop commit to: review the National Youth Strategy 2007-2013 and perspectives by starting discussions on the preparation of the Youth Law in collaboration with all youth CSOs by November 2013.

Focal point: Envina Xhemi - MTKRS

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Ministry of MTKRS Youth CSOs Council of Europe TACSO Albania Media Other international organisations in Albania	To reflect on the impact of the present strategy Obtain lessons learned Draft the relevant youth law	Information, consultations, media

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Situation analyses	MTKRS, youth CSOs and networks	•	•	•									
Information sessions	MTKRS, youth CSOs and networks	•		•		•	•						
Facilitate and coordinate the consultation meetings with CSOs/roundtables/ Conferences	MTKRS, youth CSOs and networks, TACSO Albania	•		•				•			•		•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Based on the sharing of experiences sessions, Kosovo and Serbia have well established mechanisms in place to support the process Turkey was also interested in the follow-up process	Sharing of experiences, know-how	Networking

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Albania – Klodjan Seferaj (Department of Strategy & Donor Coordination, DSDC) Diana Culi (Independent Forum of NGOs), Envina Xhemi (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, MTKRS), Nertil Guri (Albanian Blind Association), Aferdita Selimaj (Public Albanian Radio and Television/ Radio, Tirana).

Background Note: The Government of Albania is in the process of reviewing the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007-2013 and also drafting the new NSDI for the period 2013-2020. It is also gathering input from all ministries to incorporate in the new NSDI, as in the case of the MTKRS.

In December 2011, the Strategic Planning Committee chaired by the Prime Minister, as the highest decision-making structure for policy-making, approved the drafting process and methodology for the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2013-2020.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2013-2020, like the current NSDI 2007-2013, is the fundamental strategic document of the country that harmonises in a single strategic document the perspective of sustainable economic and social development and integration into the European Union (its draft passed through a long consultation process with all interest groups including sectorial and cross-cutting strategies). This document will be the synthesis of all strategies and policies that will guide medium-term budgetary programming (MTBP). It will also include all the important reforms that the Albanian administration will take towards full European integration of the country. Meanwhile, this strategy will serve as a basic document in determining the policy priorities, medium-term budget programme design and orientation of donor funding, especially funding from the EU program, IPA, for the period 2013-2020.

The preparation and drafting of the NSDI 2013 – 2020 will be a synthesis of all sectoral and cross-cutting strategies. Line ministry are entrusted with the quality and timely preparation of sectoral and crosscutting strategy documents.

It is also important to mention that donor strategies or cooperation programmes are also developed in consultation with civil society, as in the case of the latest development of the New Cooperation Programme One UN 2012-2016 with the United Nations aided by CSOs based in their field of expertise. The same practice is widely followed by the EU, Sweden, Switzerland and other donors.

Commitment   No. 4

The participants in this workshop commit to: ensure a participatory approach by CSOs in the process of reviewing the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) and drafting the new NSDI for the period 2013-2020 by November 2013.

Focal point: DSDS, MTKRS

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
DSDC All Ministries CSOs Media Donors	To best reflect priorities of the country	The process will continue through coordination and sharing of information among all stakeholders

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Consultations with ministries and CSOs to reflect the civil society perspective	DSDC, MTKRS	•	•	•	•								
Roundtable to follow-up the process for implementation	DSDC, MTKRS					•			•		•		•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?

Draft list of ideas to improve standards and partnership/communication within the next 2-3 years

Country name:

Idea	ALBANIAN Culture Strategy	
Additional resources required		
Additional support required	What?	From whom?
	Consultation process and consultation paper for the design of the Albanian Strategy on Culture and Tourism. Exploring models in the region.	Culture Policy Department and Tourism Department in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture Youth and Sports. Line Ministries: (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Transport, etc.) Civil Society Organisations; The Commercial Room of Albania, Institute of Heritage Patrimony, Universities: public and private, Academy of Arts, the academic staff.
	Design of the Strategy on Culture and Tourism and the presentation of the draft law to all the stakeholders.	International donor and support organisations in Albania: cultural organisations, local decision making institutions: municipalities, regions, prefectures. Colleagues and experts form the Balkan region involved in previous experiences.
	Lobbing for the endorsement of the Strategy in the Albanian Parliament.	Minister of Tourism Culture Youth and Sports, Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Media and Education,

Draft list of ideas to improve standards and partnership/communication within the next 2-3 years

Country name:

Idea	ALBANIAN YOUTH LAW	
Additional resources required		
Additional support required	What?	From whom?
	Consultation process and consultation paper for the design of the Albanian Youth law. Exploring models in the region.	Youth Policy Department in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture Youth and Sports. Line Ministries (Ministry of Labour Social, Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, etc.) Civil Society Organisations.
	Design of the Youth Law and the presentation of the draft Law to all the stakeholders.	International donor and support organisations in Albania. Colleagues and experts form the region that have been through the same process.
	Lobbing for the endorsement of the Youth law in the Albanian Parliament.	Minister of Tourism Culture Youth and Sports.
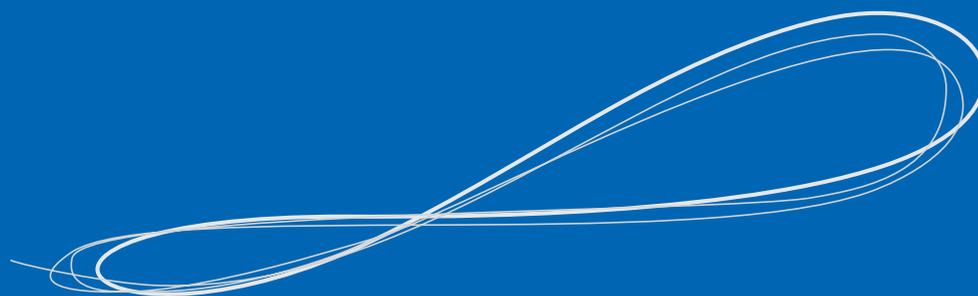
ANEX III - BiH

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Amra Seleskovic, VESTA (TACSO BH LAG); Milan Miric, ICVA; Aida Vezic, MOZAIK; Aida Daguda, Civil Society Promotion Centre; Milan Mrdja, Civil Society Promotion Centre; Lazar Prodanovic, Parliamentarian; Sadeta Skaljic, Sector for Civil Society Ministry of Justice BH; Gordana Sarovic, Journalist RTV RS; Mirjana Valjevac Popovic, USAID (TACSO BH LAG); Samir Omerefendic, UNDP; Stefania Koskova, OSCE; Slavica Draskovic (TACSO BH RA).

Commitment   **No. 1**

A discussion on the government strategy on creating an enabling environment for civil society development at the state level at the conference organised by TACSO BH in December 2012.

The participants in this workshop commit to: participate in the preparation of event to be organised by TACSO BH in Dec. 2012 to discuss the status, the process of developing the strategy for creating an enabling environment for civil society development in BH by November 2013.

Focal point: Slavica Draskovic - TACSO BH

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Planning and organising event	TACSO BH - Slavica Draskovic	•	•										
Strategy Where we are now	Sector for Civil Society, Ministry of Justice - Sadeta Skaljic	•	•										
Agreement Plus Strategy	Centre for Civil Society Promotion - Milan Mrdja	•	•										

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Montenegro offered support in the preparing national strategy document from both NGO and government side (Ana Novakovic from CRNVO and Danka Latkovic from the Office for Cooperation) * Serbia will also give support.	Preparation of a national strategy document for both NGOs and the government	The TACSO BH office will invite them to the December conference

Commitment   **No. 2**

Cooperation between parliament and the NGO sector: establishment of institutional mechanisms of cooperation between CSOs and parliamentarians using of mechanisms that already exist (virtual parliament, public discussion, institute of "empty chair") by November 2013.

Focal point: Slavica Draskovic - TACSO BH

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
General meetings with all stakeholders	*Concrete action points will be created at initial meeting	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Case study	Aida Vezic			•	•	•	•						
Planning of key actors' meeting	Slavica Draskovic			•	•	•	•	•					
* Concrete action points will be created on initial meeting					•	•	•	•	•				

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?

Commitment **No. 3**

Implementation of consultative mechanisms regarding rules of consultations; support to planning the event with participants from both the government and CS; discussion of the functionality of the consultative mechanisms (rules on the consultations); achievements and limitations by November 2013.

Focal point: Slavica Draskovic - TACSO BH

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?

Commitment   **No. 4**

Creation of sector consultative mechanisms about the involvement of civil society in the programming of the EU (IPA); support SECO mechanisms based on experience and lessons learned from neighbouring countries (Serbia and Croatia) by November 2013.

Focal point: Slavica Draskovic - TACSO BH

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Amra Seleskovic	TACSO BH LAG study visit to Serbia - SECO mechanism	TACSO BH LAG member
Slavica Draskovic	Planning and organising conference in December, 2012	TACSO BH staff

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Feedback on study visit to Serbia re: SECO mechanisms	Amra Seleskovic	•	•										
Organising conference in December, 2012.	Slavica Draskovic	•	•	•									

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Ivana Cirkovic - Office for Cooperation with CSOs, Government of Serbia	Experience sharing and lessons learned re: SECO mechanisms	TACSO BH office

ANEX III - Croatia

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Ana Balaband, Office of the Prime Minister of the Government of Croatia; Gordan Bosanac, Centre for Peace Studies (CMS); Iva Jantolek, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs; Vesna Lendić-Kasalo, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs (GOfCNGOs); Slađana Novota, Council for Civil Society Development (CCSD) and Association for CS Development (SMART); Gordana Obradović Dragišić, Initiative for ODA Platform; Maja Stanojević-Pokrovac, Croatian Employers Association (CEA); Tihomir Ponoš, Novi List.

Facilitaded by: Aida Bagić, TACSO Croatia Resident Advisor

Commitment   **No. 1**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **work on improving cooperation between the Council for Civil Society Development and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development** by November 2013.

Focal point: Slađana Novota

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Council for Civil Society Development CSO Initiative on improving NFCSD Work		

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Thematic meetings as needed	Vesna Lendić-Kasalo - GOfCNGOs												
Continuous communication with the NFCSD Governing Board	Slađana Novota - CCSD		•										
Send recommendations on behalf of the CCSD	Slađana Novota - CCSD		•										
Send recommendations on behalf of the CSO Initiative	Gordan Bosanac - CMS		•										

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?

Commitment   No. 2

The participants in this workshop commit to: **work on the implementation of the Code on Consulting the Public at the local level** by November 2013.

Focal Point: Vesna Lendić-Kasalo

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs State Public Administration School Human Rights House TACSO		

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Informe the group on the education of coordinators for consulting (National Strategy for Creating an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development - Measure 7.3)	Vesna Lendić-Kasalo -GOfCNGOs				•								
Exploring options to educate CSOs on consultative processes - organise a meeting	Aida Bagić – TACSO				•								

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Representatives from Turkey expressed their interest in learning and sharing their experiences from local citizens' assemblies		Study visits, exchange of information

Commitment   No. 3

The participants in this workshop commit to: **ensure a framework for partnership in providing ODA in the region (standards)** by November 2013

Focal point: Iva Jantolek

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
MFEA ODA CSO platform NFCSD Interagency WG on ODA GOfCNGOs TACSO	Coordinating body for ODA Coordination of CSOs	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Establish ODA Platform	Gordan Bosanac - CMS; Gordana Obradović Dragišić - Initiative for ODA Platform; Aida Bagić - TACSO									•			
Providing information on the public call for ODA providers	Iva Jantolek - MFEA		•										

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
CSOs in the region TRIALOGUE	Informing on the needs in their countries Money and expertise	

Commitment   No. 4

The participants in this workshop commit to: **support the initiative to establish a national monitoring body/mechanism within the parliament on Croatia's commitments in the area of human rights protection** by November 2013,

Focal point: Gordan Bosanac

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Platform 112 CCSD CEA EESC	To safeguard human rights standards achieved	Initiator

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Thematic sessions of CCSD	Slađana Novota - CCSD; Gordan Bosanac - CMS			•									
Informing CEA on the initiative	Maja Pokrovac – CEA	•											
Informing PM office on the initiative	Ana Balaband - PM Office	•											

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Bulgarian and Romanian NGOs Green party EUCLID	Experience sharing Political influence (HBS)	
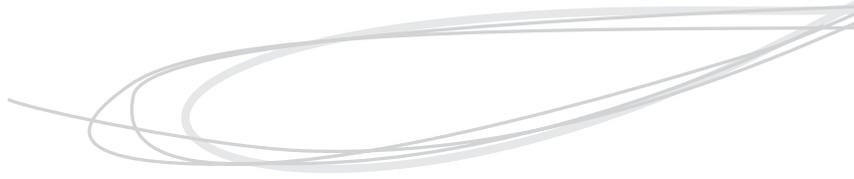
ANEX III - Kosovo

Kosovo National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Besim Kajtazi, Director of Legal Office, (OPM[42]); Habit Hajredini, Director of the Office for Good Governance (OPM), Valdete Idrizi, Executive Director, CiviKos Platform; Leon Malazogu, Executive Director -Development for Democracy (D4D); Gaby Hagmuller, Team Leader-EUD Kosovo; Visare Gorani, Programme Manager - Embassy of Sweden, Kosovo.

Background Note: The Kosovo Government, in close cooperation with civil society, has prepared the first strategy for cooperation with civil society. The CiviKos platform is mandated to coordinate this process based on the signed memorandum in 2007 and recent consultations within the civil society sector. This strategy, accompanied by its five-year action plan is foreseen to be approved in November/December 2012. The commitments made during the conference are in line with overall developments and processes on-going in Kosovo.

Commitment   No. 1

The participants in this workshop commit to: **adoption and implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Office for Good Governance - OPM Line Ministries CiviKos Platform and other CSOs Partners Donors	Government - because of their MANDATE Civil Society - because of their MISSION Partners/Donors - to support and increase participation of CSOs in decision-making to support EU Integration	

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42   Office of the Prime Minister

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Adopt Strategy	Government (OGG-OPM)		•										
Consultations	Government and Civil Society (OGG and CiviKos)		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Promotion of the Strategy	Government and Civil Society			•	•	•	•	•	•				
Develop monitoring mechanisms	Government and Civil Society (OGG and CiviKos)								•	•	•	•	•
First monitoring report	Government												•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Croatian Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society and the National Council Slovenian CNVOS EU TACSO Donors	Lessons learned, exchange of experience, peer to peer learning Align support with strategy objectives	

Offered Support:

- Croatian Delegation offered support/assistance - to be facilitated by TACSO.
- Montenegro delegation also offered to help Kosovo in preparation of the strategy.

Commitment   No. 2

The participants in this workshop commit to: **create and use the Forum for Public Consultations** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Legal Office – OPM, Besim Kajtazi Line Ministries & other agencies Municipalities Civil Society	Government -because of their MANDATE Civil Society - because of their MISSION to reach out to civil society and citizens	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Develop standards	Legal office – OPM, Besim						•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Adoption of standards	Legal office – OPM, Besim												•
Training government officials to implement standards	Legal office – OPM, Besim & KIPA						•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
IPA Countries – models EUD in Kosovo TACSO Donors	Lessons learned, exchange of experience, peer to peer learning TA in support of the creation of the Forum for Public Consultations	

Offered Support:

- Croatian Delegation offered support/assistance – to be facilitated by TACSO.
- Montenegro delegation also offered to help Kosovo in preparation of the strategy.

ANEX III - Macedonia

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Elena Kocoska, Petre Mrkev

Commitment   **No. 1**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **establishment of a council for dialogue between the government and CSOs** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
General Secretariat and Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs LAG Broader CS community Contact points in line ministries	This measure is a part of government strategy LAG are initiators Relevant stakeholders	Meetings, debates, consultations

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
LAG meeting	TACSO	•											
Meetings in networks with LAG members	LAG members		•	•	•								
Broader consultations with CSOs	LAG members & TACSO					•	•						
Meetings with the government unit and the General Secretariat	LAG & TACSO							•					

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Croatian Council	Sharing of best practices and experiences (already on-going)	
Montenegro Council	Sharing of the report from evaluation of the Croatian Council's operation	

Commitment   **No. 2**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **promote and support informal mechanisms of cooperation among CSOs and MPs (Inter-party Parliamentarian Group)** by November 2013

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
CSOs, organisations of disabled persons Macedonian Parliament	Promotion and inclusion of the disability question IPPG for disabilities is a good model for cooperation Acquire knowledge and skills Communication channel, best practices Sharing and solution Legislation	Debates Study visit Training Public hearings Active participation and direct involvement

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Anniversary - 10 years of IPPG	IPPG, Technical Committee						•						
Promotional materials	IPPG, Technical Committee				•	•							
Study visit	IPPG, Technical Committee, EU Parliament										•	•	

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
EU		

Commitment   No. 3

The participants in this workshop commit to: **contribute to involvement of CSOs in processes of decentralisation of services** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment, we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Ministry of Local Self-government ZELS (Association of the Units of Local Self-government) CSOs, particularly grassroots CSOs Service providers	Implementation of decentralisation process Providing sustainability to local CSOs High quality services provided	Debates Meetings Working groups Conference

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Debate													

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Serbia (CI) *		

Commitment   **No. 4**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **improve the trust of the public and the government towards CSOs** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
CSOs Media Government Unit for Cooperation with NGOs Broader public	To build trust and create partnerships	Information events Debates Promote best practices

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Debate	TACSO, LAG					•							

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues/organisations/institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
EU countries' experiences IPA countries' experiences	Sharing experiences	

ANEX III - Montenegro

National Commitment and Action Plans

Workshop participants: Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organisations (CRNVO), Government Office for Cooperation with CSOs, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro, UNDP and OSCE.

Commitment   **No. 1**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **effective monitoring of public policies for cooperation between national and local authorities and CSOs** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Centre for Development of Non-governmental Organisations (CRNVO), Government Office for Cooperation with CSOs (liaison officers), Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro, UNDP, OSCE, Union of municipalities	Relevant capacities, experiences, sources of information	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

ACTS TO MONITOR METHODOLOGY														
Actions	**Responsible person**	**Month**												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Law on CSOs	Liaison officers/ government	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Decree on cooperation between state bodies and CSOs	Danka Latkovič (Chief of Office Government Office for Cooperation with CSOs)													
Local acts that regulate cooperation	Ana Novaković (Executive Director - Centre for Development of Non-governmental Organisations (CRNVO))													
Focus groups	Mirsad Bibović (Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro)													
Interviews														
Requests for free access to information, questionnaires														

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Aida (BiH-Mozaik)		There are monitoring matrix templates developed for monitoring the implementation of the justice strategy in BiH

Commitment **No. 2**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **the creation of the policy research paper on establishing functional consultative meetings for programming** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro	Part of mandate	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Preparation of a policy paper by engaging international experts and exploring regional practices	Mirsad Bibović (Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Ana Novaković (Executive Director of the Centre for Development of Non-governmental Organisations (CRNVO))												

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
TACSO Civic initiatives (Serbia) TACSO Croatia Gong	Experience in consultative process of programming sources	Engaging representatives of institutions and organisations in working groups formed by the Council for Cooperation

Commitment   No. 3

The participants in this workshop commit to: **introducing local communities with public policies regulating cooperation between local authorities and CSOs** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Union of municipalities, OSCE, other donors, Centre for Development of Non-governmental Organisations (CRNVO)	Follow up	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Roundtables with all stakeholders (CSOs, citizens, local self-government)	Lidija Knežević (Executive Director of Centre for Development of Non-governmental Organisations (CRNVO))				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
TACSO Turkey		They would do follow-up and share their knowledge from local citizens' assemblies

Commitment   **No. 4**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **create a proposal for enhancing capacities of the Council and Office for Cooperation and submit it to the government** by November 2013.

Focal point

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro	Part of mandate	

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Create a proposal	Mirsad Bibović (Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Organisations in Montenegro)						•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Submission of the proposal	Danka Latković (Chief of Office, Government Office for Cooperation with CSOs)												

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Council for Cooperation and Office for Cooperation from Croatia	Experience in capacity building	

Draft list of ideas to improve standards and partnership/communication within the next 2-3 years

Country name: Montenegro

Idea	Improving financial viability (public financing, private giving)	
Additional resources required		
Additional support required	What?	From whom?
	Monitoring of bylaws regulating public financing	Government
	Changes of public policies regulating public financing	
	Improving national legislation for private donations	

ANEX III - Regional

Regional ideas to improve standards and partnership/communication within the next 2-3 years

Regional group participants: Karin Schulz, Åke Sahlin, Andris Kesteris, Lone Sorensen¸ Branka Peurača, Dragan Golubovic, Vedran Dzihic, Rafal Serafin, Tanja Hafner Ademi, Miroslaw Warowicki, Daniela Plugaru, Palle Westergaard.

Idea	Learn from agents of change from CSOs and the public sector successful in cooperation/partnership	
Additional resources required		
Additional support required	What?	From whom?
	Identify agent of change	
	Showcase champions in meetings and conferences	
	Share experiences from the local level involving young leaders	
	Mentoring between successful agents of change and wannabes	

Idea	Civil society engagement with authorities has been mainstreamed into the sector approach (EC funds)	
Additional resources required		
Additional support required	What?	From whom?
	Lobby for consultation on national level	CSOs and the government
	Exchange of experiences on a regional level	EC, CSO, TACSO
	Commission to develop appropriate guidelines for involvement of CSOs	ECD

Idea	Engage in public activism	
Additional resources required		
Additional support required	What?	From whom?
	Tap into advocacy of grassroots initiatives	Formal mechanisms of CSOs
	Seize the moment and support the initiatives when they arise	CSO, donors, private sector
	Hold a conference to share experiences from civic activism	TACSO
	Explore how social media can be used for public activism	TACSO, donors, academia
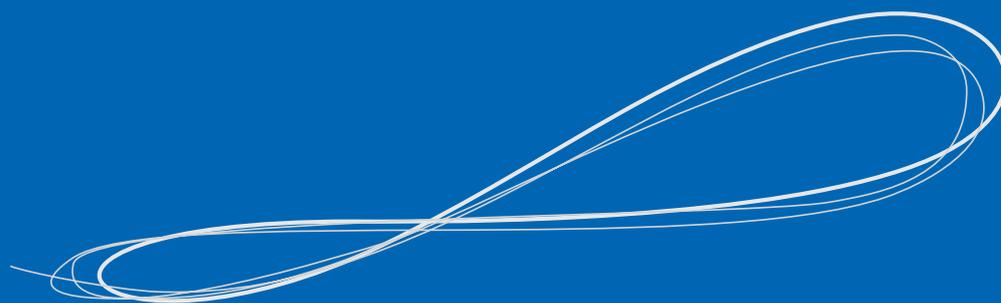
ANEX III - Serbia

National Commitment and action plans

Workshop participants: Ivana Cirkovic, Director, Government of Serbia, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society; Biljana Milosavljevic, Head of Education Unit, National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia; Ljiljana Bukvic, Journalist, Daily newspaper Danas; Bosiljka Joksimovic, Advisor for Planning and Coordination of Assistance in the area of Civil Society, Media and Culture, Serbian European Integration Office; Gorana Odanovic, Researcher and Networking Coordinator, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy; Dubravka Velat, Executive Director, Civic Initiatives Belgrade; Vladan Avramovic, Political Officer, British Embassy Belgrade; Dragana Stevanovic Kolakovic, Project Management Specialist for Civil Society USAID; Zorica Raskovic, TACSO Serbia.

Commitment   **No. 1**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **initiate implementation of the BCSDN matrix, Section III, for Monitoring of the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development** by November 2013.

Focal point: Dubravka Velat

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Civic Initiatives, Belgrade SEKO for Civil Society FENS	To obtain the widest networks in Serbia	Information sharing Consultation Questionnaire Public Events

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Introduction	Civic initiatives	•	•	•									
Research	Civic initiatives				•	•	•	•	•				
Public events	Civic initiatives								•	•	•	•	•
Follow up	Advocacy group										•	•	•

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
BCSDN members Office for Cooperation with CSOs SEIO (Serbia EU Integration Office) EU Delegation to Serbia TACSO Media (Danas newspaper) ECNL	Information sharing Exchange of experiences	

Commitment   No. 2

The participants in this workshop commit to: **support initiated changes of the Rules of Procedure of the Serbian National Government** by the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society by November 2013.

Focal point: Ivana Cirkovic

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
CSOs TACSO supporting CSO initiatives		Focus CSO initiatives via concrete proposals to the relevant governmental institutions

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Advocating	Dubravka, V. and Gorana, O.	•	•	•									
Press involvement	Ljiljana		•	•									
Sending amendments to GoS					•	•							
Getting more voices/ support													
Addressing more government institutions													

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
MS Government examples: Slovenian, Macedonian Government CRO Office for Cooperation with CSOs	Models, good practices, lessons learnt	Transfer of knowledge and practices

Commitment   **No. 3**

The participants in this workshop commit to: **Further facilitate easier communication between the government, National Parliament and civil society** by November 2013.

Focal point: Ivana Cirkovic

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

Name of person/organisation/ institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Office for Cooperation with CS Civic Initiatives TACSO USAID and British Embassy Peoples' Parliament, Educational Centre Leskovac		

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Training PLAN for CSOs on how to approach governmental institutions	Ivana Cirkovic, Zorica Raskovic, Dubravka Velat, Biljana Milosavljevic	•	•	•	•	•							
Pilot training plan							•	•	•	•	•		
Assess and initiate Parliament's Book of Rule Changing (propose obligatory consultations)	MP					•	•	•	•	•	•		
Assess relevant bylaws in the frame of regulations and determine consultation channels	Ivana Cirkovic Relevant CSOs			•	•	•	•	•	•				

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
ECNL Think tanks CSOs ME can help with facilitation and cooperation with parliament	Input for bylaws' stipulations as defined	

Commitment   No. 4

The participants in this workshop commit to: **Initiate participation of civil society in EU negotiations through SEKO mechanism** by November 2013.

Focal point: Gorana Odanovic and Dubravka Velat

In order to achieve this commitment we will involve the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in **our country**:

| Name of person/organisation/institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
SEKO members (Rule of Law, CSOs and media) SEIO Office for Cooperation with CS Relevant line ministries for Chapters 23 and 24 Local TACSO office	As key players	Meetings Trainings Dialogue

Preliminary action plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions	Responsible person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Trainings for CSOs and public institutions	Office for cooperation - Ivana		•			•			•			•	
Raising awareness		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Meetings with relevant line ministries							•	•	•	•	•	•	

Peer support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions **in the region and the EU**:

Name of person/organisation/institution	What kind of support do we need from them?	How will we get them involved?
Platform 112 Croatia Romanian CSOs Montenegrin CSOs TACSO	Trainings Exchange of know-how Lessons learnt	
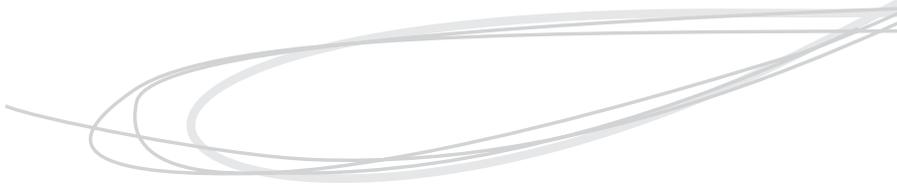
ANEX III - Turkey

National Commitments and Action Plans

Turkey National Working Group

Workshop Participants: Bülent Özcan, Ministry of EU Affairs; Özer Kaya, Department of Associations, Ministry of Interior; Hudai Şencan, YASA-DER Legislation Association and Turkish Parliament/Legislative Expert; Başak Saral, Habitat for Youth and Governance Association; Başak Ersen, TUSEV Foundation; Gokhan Kılınç, Civil Society Development Centre (STGM); Selma Acuner, European Women's Lobby Coordination to Turkey, Ankara Ka-Der Association; Neslihan Özgüneş, TACSO Turkey; Ayca Bulut Bican, TACSO Turkey.

Commitment   **No. 1**

Background Information: The Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasama Dernegi – Yasa-Der) has recently completed a project funded by the "Matra Pre-Accession Programme" aiming to strengthen the legislative process by ensuring civil society participation in decision-making processes. The project had three components: developing mechanisms for civil society participation in the parliamentary decision-making system; improving the legislative process to facilitate participation of all stakeholders; and finally creating a legislative academy that would build the capacity of experts and CSOs in the legislative process.

The project has produced a draft law that proposes the following mechanisms for participation: a hearing mechanism for different commissions; a CSO Office in Parliament to assist CSOs in accessing parliamentarians and the parliamentary system; and the possibility of providing written views. The commitment below would contribute to the participation of civil society by making processes more transparent and allowing participation online.

The participants of this workshop commit to: advocating for enhancing the participation of civil society in the legislative process via online technologies by November 2013.

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der)	They are the key organisation with access to parliament and they have extensive and unique experience regarding civil society participation of the legislative process. Yasa-Der has recently completed a project on improving CS participation in the legislative process. They have drafted a law that proposes a CSO Office, mechanisms for participation and state funding mechanisms for CSOs.	Mr Hüdai Şencan from the workshop participants will coordinate the process within the Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der).
Civil Society Development Centre (STGM)	STGM has an extensive network including local CSOs and they were closely involved in the new constitution process, which is a unique experience for civil society participation in the legislative process.	Mr Gökhan Kılınç will coordinate the work of STGM to ensure the participation and contribution of CSOs.
CSOs involved in the Yasa-Der project "Improving the Legislative Process"	There is considerable experience and content within the project that can benefit this process.	Yasa-Der can facilitate the process.

Preliminary Action Plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions Actions	Responsible Person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
STGM will collect and report the demands and expectations from CSOs with reference to participation in the legislative process via online technologies	Mr Gökhan Kılınç will follow up on the process		•										
The Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der) will conduct meetings with CSOs to receive expectations and develop a concept for online consultations to advocate in the parliament	Mr Hudai Sencan will follow up on the process				•		•						

Peer Support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in the region and EU:

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der) will research EU Models for online participation mechanisms	EU models are important reference to EU accession works	
TACSO Macedonia will provide information on the Macedonian experience on the issue	They have important experience for online consultation	Contact via TACSO Turkey
Citizens' Initiative		Contact via TACSO Turkey

Commitment   **No. 2**

Background information: As part of the project, "Strengthening Civil Society Participation in the Legislative Process", Yasader has drafted a law referring to a CSO Office within the parliament. This activity would serve to contribute to the draft law to ensure that the proposal is satisfactory to civil society.

The participants of this workshop commit to: organising consultations with CSOs to develop a joint position of civil society on the creation of a contact point in the parliament by November 2013

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der)	They are the key organisation with access to parliament and they have extensive and unique experience in civil society participation in the legislative process. Yasa-Der has recently completed a project on improving CS participation in the legislative process. They have drafted a law that proposes a CSO office, mechanisms for participation and sate funding mechanisms for CSOs.	Mr Hüdai Şencan from workshop participants will coordinate the process within the Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der)
Civil Society Development Centre (STGM)	STGM has an extensive network including local CSOs and they were closely involved in the new constitution process, which is a unique experience for civil society participation in the legislative process.	Mr Gökhan Kılınç will coordinate the work of STGM to ensure the support and requests from CSOs.
TUSEV Foundation	TUSEV is a key stakeholder in civil society in Turkey with reference to laws and regulations affecting the civil society environment and they are implementing the CSO/Public Cooperation Component of the CSO Consortium Project.	Mr Başak Ersen will coordinate TUSEV's work for this action.
Habitat for Youth and Governance	Habitat has extensive experience working with youth and local CSOs and governments.	Ms Başak Saral will coordinate Habitat Associations' work for this action.

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Women's Organisations	EWL and Ankara Ka-Der are a part of various large women's CSO networks. They will disseminate the information and promote the process to women's CSOs.	Ms Selma Acuner will follow up on the dissemination of information and promotion of the action among women's CSOs in Turkey.
CSOs involved in the Yasa-Der project "Improving the Legislative Process"	There is considerable experience and content within the project that can benefit this process.	Yasa-Der can facilitate the process.

Preliminary Action Plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions Actions	Responsible Person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Effective participatory methods will be agreed upon.	Participants will communicate on the methodology; STGM will take the lead on this process.		•	•									
Turkish Association of Legislation (Yasa-Der) will review the proposed action plan.	Mr Hudai Şencan will bring the action plan to the management of the Legislative Association.				•								
The Legislative Association will conduct consultancy meetings on the issue with CSOs.	Mr Hudai Sencan will follow up with the support of STGM.					•							
All participants will promote and be engaged in the consultation process for the creation of a common position for civil society.	All participants will mobilise their networks and follow up the process on behalf of their organisations.						•	•	•				

Peer Support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in the region and EU:

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
National Democratic Institute	They have extensive experience on the participation of CS to legislative processes in Turkey	TACSO TR will facilitate the communication with NDI
TACSO Macedonia will provide information on Macedonian Experience on the issue	They have important experience with MOST CSO case as Parliament Contact Point	Contact via TACSO Turkey

Commitment   **No. 3**

Background Information: Existing resources and opportunities are available within the scope of regular consultation meetings held by the Ministry of EU Affairs and the CSO Consortium Project. The Ministry of EU Affairs has initiated a project in collaboration with a CSO Consortium composed of 6 major CSOs in Turkey. The project's overall objective is "strengthening democratic institutions through a broader and active involvement of civil society organisations promoting pluralism and values of European integration in the governmental processes".

The actions related to the commitment below will take place as part of the component where the expected result is "reaching a new level where permanent dialogue between civil society and government relations are held and civil society participation to public debate and decision-making is increased visibly" These actions will be carried out by TUSEV, STGM and YADA and three members of the CSO Consortium.

The participants of this workshop commit to: using existing opportunities to enable an inclusive discussion on the expectations of the members of civil society with regard to cooperation between civil society and public institutions by November 2013.

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Ministry of EU Affairs	The ministry holds regular consultative meetings with civil society. This is an opportunity to integrate the topic into one of their regular meetings.	Ministry of EU Affairs will use their regular consultative meetings to provide CSOs with the opportunity to talk about CS/government dialogue.
STGM-TUSEV	STGM and TUSEV are currently running a consortium project on civil society/government cooperation	TUSEV will utilise the meetings that are part of their project to give CSOs the opportunity to discuss CS/government dialogue.
HABITAT	HABITAT has extensive experience working with youth and local CSOs and governments.	HABITAT will be involved in the planning and implementation of activities.
Ministry of Interior, Department of Associations	The Department of Associations is a key stakeholder in relation to work with CSOs.	The Department of Associations will assist the Ministry of EU Affairs and can be consulted by the consortium project.

Preliminary Action Plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions Actions	Responsible Person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Putting the issue/discussion on the agenda of civil society.	STGM and TUSEV		•	•									
Developing a participatory methodology for discussions	STGM and TUSEV lead in consultation with HABITAT			•									
Organisation of internal discussion meetings with CSOs as part of consortium project	STGM and TUSEV lead in collaboration with Ministry of EU Affairs and Department of Associations				•	•							
Organisation of Civil Society meetings as part of EU Ministry regular activities.	Ministry of EU Affairs in consultation with Department of Associations, TUSEV and STGM				•	•							
Preparation of CSO position paper	STGM and TUSEV in collaboration with HABITAT and other key stakeholders						•	•					
Determining the most suitable contact persons to conduct follow-up actions from public institutions	Ministry of EU Affairs and Department of Associations						•						
Communication with public institutions on CSOs' position	STGM and TUSEV with assistance of Ministry of EU Affairs and Department of Associations							•	•				

Peer Support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in the region and EU:

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Reviewing available experiences on the issue in EU and WB	All participants	TACSO Turkey will support the process

Commitment   **No. 4**

The participants of this workshop commit to: contributing to the process of institutionalising cooperation between civil society and public institutions in Turkey by sharing civil society expectations on the issues with representatives from public institutions by November 2013.

Note: This activity is conceived as a follow-up to Commitment No. 3 and should take place after that is completed.

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Prime Ministry	Prime Ministry is a key stakeholder in relation to the creation of potential mechanisms.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
Ministry of Interior	Department of Associations is working under MoI and it is the key institution related to civil society.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
Ministry of EU Affairs	Ministry of EU Affairs coordinates all work in relation to EU accession and they have a department for collaboration with civil society.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
Ministry of Family and Social Policies	They are closely related to CSOs in their work areas and conduct consultations on draft laws and regulations.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
Prime Ministry - Directorate General of Foundations	They are key stakeholders responsible for foundations.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
Ministry of Development	They provide funding to CSOs via SODES and regional development agencies.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
TIKA	They are the agency coordinating Turkey's support to CSOs abroad.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
PM Inspection Board	They are responsible for OGP Action Plan of Turkey.	MoI and EU Ministry will facilitate the process.
Legislative Association (Yasa-Der)	They are the key organisation with access to parliament and they have extensive and unique experience regarding civil society participation in the legislative process. Yasa-Der has recently completed a project on improving CS participation in the legislative process. They have drafted a law that proposes a CSO office, mechanisms for participation and state funding mechanisms for CSOs.	

Preliminary Action Plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions Actions	Responsible Person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Support to selecting CSO representatives to attend consultation meetings with public institution representatives	STGM and TUSEV							•	•				
Encouraging people who can influence decision-makers to attend the meetings as government representatives	MoI and EU Ministry							•	•				
Conducting discussion and consultation meetings with public institutions on position of civil society on cooperation with public institutions	MoI, DoA - Mr Özer Kaya and The EU Ministry - Mr Bülent Özcan									•	•		
Organisation of dialogue meetings with public and civil society representatives on expectations of cross-sectoral cooperation and possible mechanisms	MoI and EU Ministry, TUSEV and STGM									•	•		

Peer Support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in the region and EU:

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
PM Inspection Board	OGP Action Plan	MoI and EU Ministry

Commitment   **No. 5**

Background Information: The Ministry of Interior Department of Associations is currently drafting a law that foresees the improvement of the legal framework that regulates civil society, specifically associations. The draft law proposes the establishment of two bodies: a Civil Society Council and a Civil Society Board. The Civil Society Council will aim to enable the cooperation of government and civil society in developing policies for an enabling environment for civil society. The Civil Society Board will monitor the implementation of the council's decisions and will play an advisory role on issues such as public benefit status and determination of the concepts for grant schemes by the Department of Associations. The board will be composed of government and civil society representatives as well as academicians. The draft law will be shared with all stakeholders for consultations when it is finalised. This activity is intended to contribute to this process and ensure that the result is satisfactory to civil society.

The participants of this workshop commit to: supporting the will among civil society and government for the establishment of cooperation mechanisms between public institutions and civil society by November 2013.

Note: This commitment should run in conjunction with Commitment No. 3 and should contribute to Commitment No. 4. The timetable will be determined jointly by workshop participants in relation to the above activities.

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
Ministry of Interior	Ministry of Interior is currently in the process of drafting a law for the establishment of an institution in relation to civil society/government cooperation.	The Department of Associations will lead the consultative process.
Ministry of EU Affairs	Ministry of EU Affairs coordinates all work in relation to EU accession and they have a department for collaboration with civil society.	The Ministry of EU Affairs can provide assistance in the process.
TUSEV	TUSEV has extensive experience in CSO/ government cooperation related issues and is part of a consortium of CSOs working on this topic.	TUSEV will provide expertise as well as input from CSOs.
STGM/CSDC	Civil Society Development Centre is leader of a consortium project working on the topic of CS/government cooperation.	STGM will provide expertise as well as input from CSOs.
HABITAT	HABITAT has extensive experience in governance issues.	HABITAT will provide expertise as well as input from CSOs
Women's organisations	Women's organisations have extensive experience working with the government at different levels.	Women's organisations will provide their expertise and input on the issue.

Preliminary Action Plan for implementing this commitment:

Actions Actions	Responsible Person	Month											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Consultative meetings organised with CSOs	MoI and all participants												
Dissemination of information on best practices, models and draft regulations; getting feedback from CSOs	MoI and all participants												
Informative meetings, seminars and conferences for experience and expertise sharing on possible mechanisms	MoI and all participants												
Designing follow up process	All participants												

Peer Support

When planning and implementing this commitment we would also like to draw on support/lessons learned from the following colleagues / organisations / institutions in the region and EU:

Name of the Person/ Organisation/ Institution	Why should they be involved?	How will we get them involved?
ECNL	They have extensive experience on the topic	TACSO Turkey will facilitate communication
TACSO project on regional level	They bring together experiences from the WB region	TACSO Turkey will facilitate communication
Croatian institutions on civil society and government cooperation: Office for Cooperation, National Council and National Foundation	They constitute a model in the region	TACSO Turkey will facilitate communication

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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.