

Progress Report Data

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Croatia	<p>Civil society organisations continue to play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy in Croatia. However, NGOs are still often viewed with suspicion from within the establishment. (P. 9)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations continue to play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy.... Overall, with some specific exceptions, civil and political rights are reasonably well respected in Croatia. However, shortcomings as regards impunity for war crimes, prison conditions and access to justice require further attention. (p. 11)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations continue to play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and protection of minorities. However, they continue to have difficulty influencing policy debate and remain relatively weak in analytical capacity.... Overall, with some specific exceptions, civil and political rights continue to be reasonably well respected in Croatia. However, shortcomings as regards impunity for war crimes and access to justice require further attention. (p. 11)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and protection of minorities. However, they continue to have difficulty influencing policy debate, partly due to the government tending not to include them in the policy-making process. With a few notable exceptions, NGOs remain relatively weak in analytical capacity. (P. 12)</p>
Macedonia	<p>The active involvement of civil society organisations in public policy-making and reforms has developed further, for instance, through making proposals for new legislation. The government adopted a strategy for co-operation with civil society in June. A new law on sponsorship and donations was enacted in April, providing tax incentives for donations and sponsorship by a local or foreign legal or physical entity. However, the strengthening of civil society requires further coordination between non-governmental organisations (NGO) and the public authorities. The development of the NGOs' activities is still hampered by a lack of resources. Changes in the criteria for allocating grants from the state budget to NGOs are still needed, so as to better define objectives and avoid non-transparent selection procedures. Overall, there has been no major violation of the civil and political rights. However, more needs to be done to improve the legal framework and enhance effective implementation of these rights. (p. 13)</p>	<p>The Government adopted a strategy for cooperation with civil society organisations and developed an action plan. One of its aims is to involve civil society more in the policy development process and in legislative drafting. The activities of civil society are still hampered by lack of finance and heavy dependence on foreign sources of financing. The 2006 Law on Sponsorship and Donations has not been implemented pending the necessary bylaws. The transparency of the criteria for allocating grants from the state budget to NGOs remains to be strengthened. ...Overall, further steps were taken to strengthen civil and political rights. However, continued efforts are needed. (p. 14)</p>	<p>Implementation of the Government's strategy and action plan for cooperation with civil society organisations is progressing. The transparency of the criteria for allocating grants from the state budget to NGOs has improved through the public announcement of the call for proposals, the selection criteria and the results. An important step forward in opening new potential sources of financing for NGOs was taken: the adoption of the implementing legislation for the law on sponsorship and donations now allows companies and physical persons to donate part of their income tax. The implementation of the law is slowly progressing, despite the complex administrative requirements. However, involvement of civil society in the policy development process and in legislative drafting is minimal. Civil society organisations remain heavily dependent on foreign funding. The lack of sufficient financial resources is a serious constraint on their ability to deliver more professional and service-oriented activities. Government initiatives to support civil society development, such as tax relief, have not been forthcoming. (p. 17)</p>	<p>Involvement of CSOs in policy-making and in legislative drafting progressed moderately. The government introduced mechanisms for consulting CSOs. Changes in the government's rulebook stipulate that draft legislation should be accessible on the relevant ministry's webpage for public consultation and that civil society can participate in working groups for drafting laws. A new government decision improved selection procedures and evaluation criteria for public financing of civil society organisations. An evaluation grid, a scoring system and an obligation to inform all applicants of the outcome were introduced. However, progress on implementing the government's strategy and action plan for cooperation with civil society organisations slowed. Implementation of the Law on Sponsorship and Donations progressed slowly, because of the complex administrative requirements and lack of public awareness. CSOs remained heavily dependent on foreign funding. The lack of sufficient financial resources continued to be a serious constraint. The government only partially respected the existing consultation mechanisms and, overall, failed to engage in a meaningful dialogue with civil society. Most of the draft legislation and regulatory impact assessment forms were not available to the general public for review. There is no systematic and transparent mechanism for consulting civil society on national development policies, legislation, programmes or other strategic documents. (P. 17)</p>

Albania	<p>A liberal law on NGOs has led to a proliferation of Albanian civil society organizations which operate without government restriction. There are some examples of successful public campaigns by civil society actors to counter public political apathy. However, civil society actors in Albania suffer from a lack of sustainable resources, a lack of organisational capacity and skills (particularly advocacy skills) and the absence of a tradition of involvement in policy-making. For these reasons NGO dialogue with Albania's government remains weak. Albania would benefit from a government policy which actively encourages NGO involvement in the mainstream decision-making process. Civil society actors would also benefit from forming closer ties with peer organisations regionally. (P. 12)</p>	<p>As regards support to civil society dialogue, € 4 million support has been earmarked for projects to enhance the role of civil society and the media in the European integration process. Albania received support from EU member states through the EU Monitoring and Information Centre for Civil Protection (MIC) to help deal with forest fires during the summer. (p. 5)</p> <p>The legal framework for civil society organisations remains open and non-restrictive. Civil society actors have been actively involved in discussions on important new laws such as the state police law and the law on higher education. However, civil society groups still lack sustainable resources, organisational capacity and advocacy skills. Albania would benefit from greater involvement of citizens in governance through civil society groups. This requires more effective channels for dialogue and greater transparency, in particular regarding public finance.</p>	<p>The legal framework for civil society organisations remains open and non-restrictive. Civil society organisations are actively monitoring respect of human rights and fulfilment of Albania's obligations under the SAA. However, civic engagement remains low. Albania has only a limited number of influential NGOs and policy institutes. Funding of civil society depends largely on foreign donor financing. Coordination mechanisms to enhance civil society participation in policy making remain weak. Civil society should increase its capacity for advocacy and public relations, networking, and development of partnerships with the government and the private sector. Financial and management capacity have to be strengthened, aiming at future sustainability of the sector. (p. 13)</p>	<p>As regards CSOs, progress can be noted. Civil society relations with the government improved. The law on the establishment of the Civil Society Foundation entered into force. However, greater efforts are needed to foster the non-profit sector and for consulting CSOs on legal and administrative reforms. The fiscal regime governing non-profit organisations remains unclear and needs to be clarified.</p> <p>Civil society is represented by many small NGOs which remain largely fragmented. The government has started to consult civil society organisations on draft laws and to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. However, there are no formal mechanisms in place for such consultations. Coordination mechanisms to enhance civil society participation in policy making remain weak. (P. 14-15)</p>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<p>As regards civil society organisations, few NGOs have a country-wide field of action, even though the Law on Associations and Foundations allows NGOs to register freely at the State Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications and to be active anywhere in the country. Many organisations prefer to register at Entity level as a result of the cumbersome procedures necessary to obtain a State-wide registration. NGO financing remains an issue. Current legislation does not give sufficient incentives to the business sector or private donors to provide support. Partly as a consequence of the war, many NGOs were created and developed in donor-driven mode, with very weak links to real societal demands. Civil society development in Bosnia and Herzegovina is adversely influenced by the complex administrative organisation of the country as well as by political misuse of ethnic and religious diversity. Religious communities have displayed an increasing interest in public affairs. Their influence is extending to areas reserved to public authorities, such as the education sector. (P. 15)</p>	<p>Some progress has been made as regards civil society organisations. The Council of Ministers signed an agreement on cooperation with the non-government sector and appointed a senior programming officer. Civil society organisations continue to register mainly at Entity level, because the registration process at State level is perceived as more bureaucratic. Few NGOs are therefore active country-wide. The Ministry of Justice is increasingly addressing this issue and providing more information on how NGOs can register at State level. The 2007 Republika Srpska Law on Income Tax exempts social assistance and humanitarian aid from taxation. ...</p> <p>Overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made little additional progress as regards civil and political rights. Some steps have been taken to support civil society development, but the sector remains weak overall. There is room for improvement as regards the prevention of illtreatment and the fight against impunity, as well as access to justice and equality before the law. (p. 16-17)</p>	<p>The constitutional framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina includes the right to freedom of assembly and association. However, there have been an increasing number of cases of intimidation against NGOs and civil society organisations. Harassment of certain collectives because of their sexual orientation has also occurred. Some progress has been made as regards civil society organisations. A Civil Society Board+D6 was established in October 2007 in accordance with the Agreement on cooperation between the NGO sector and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though the Board does not represent the whole of civil society, it has 31 sub-sectors, making it the strongest forum for NGOs in the country. However, more efforts by the authorities are needed in order to establish regular and systematic communication with civil society and to encourage its participation in policy-making. Overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made limited progress in the area of civil and political rights. Some steps have been taken to support civil society development, but the sector remains weak overall. Some progress has been made with construction of a prison facility at State level, but the management of penitentiary institutions continues to be split between the State and the Entities. No progress has been made on fostering freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. (p. 17-18)</p>	<p>As regards civil society organisations, very limited progress has been made in implementing the Agreement on cooperation between the civil society sector and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, the role of the Civil Society Board has been rather limited. There continues to be a lack of transparency in the allocation of State funds to civil society organisations. (p. 17)</p>

Montenegro	<p>Montenegro has a satisfactory legal framework for the activities of civil society organisations, although fiscal aspects are not fully covered. NGO representatives are involved in the preparations of a platform for cooperation between the Government and civil society. The Parliament has often invited NGOs to attend sessions. The Ministry of International Economic Relations and European Integration has signed a memorandum of cooperation with NGOs focusing on information and communication. NGOs are mainly active in the social field, including protection of vulnerable groups, and on election observation. They are increasingly active in the area of European matters and training of NGO representatives, academics and the public sector. However, the administration continues to show insufficient understanding of the genuine role of NGOs in a democratic society, which also involves criticism of the government. Following the proclamation of independence of Montenegro, a group of leading NGOs called upon the government to fully implement the European Partnership priorities. They also asked to be included in consultations on the drafting and adoption of the future Constitution. (P. 14-15)</p>	<p>The framework for civil society organisations is largely satisfactory. There are over 3,800 registered NGOs in Montenegro, of which only 10% are active. In fiscal terms, NGOs are treated satisfactorily. An office for cooperation with NGOs has been established within the government. A working group representing a coalition of NGOs, the UNDP, various ministries and the SEI is supporting its activities. NGOs receive funding from donors and can apply for funding from the government and from local authorities. NGOs have recommended that the allocation procedure for government funds be made more transparent, with clear criteria for distribution of funds, and that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms be developed. Overall, cooperation between the government and NGOs is improving, in particular in relation to drafting or revising legislation in social or environmental fields. However, tensions in cooperation with NGOs which perform a watchdog function have increased. (p. 13)</p>	<p>Regarding the role of civil society organisations, there have been improvements, and the strategy for cooperation between the government and NGOs is in its last consultation stage and will then need to be implemented. NGO activities often have a high public and political profile. Consultation with civil society organisations has been enhanced by the government office for NGOs, the office for gender equality and the anti-corruption commission. Civil society is represented in the Parliamentary Council for EU Integration. However, the criteria for its representation will have to be clarified. More than 4,000 NGOs are registered with the Ministry of the Interior and Public Administration, but only a much smaller number are actually performing real NGO-type activities. The NGO Law was amended in November 2007 in order to regulate commercial activities carried out by NGOs. 43 public bodies have nominated an NGO contact point, but the turnover is high, hampering communication with NGOs. Many NGOs remain donor-dependent, which weakens their strategic autonomy and generates ad hoc donor-driven project activities instead. (p. 15)</p>	<p>Regarding freedom of assembly and association, there are no restrictions to report. Some progress has been made on the role of civil society organisations. Several NGOs continue to have a high public and political profile. A strategy for cooperation between the government and NGOs was adopted in January 2009. Civil society organisations continue to be consulted by the government and are represented in the National Council for European Integration. However, the mechanism by which civil society members are elected to the National Council for European Integration has to be clarified. The number of registered NGOs has increased to 4,600, but only a small minority of them are active. Civil society groups do not yet participate in the Radio/Television Council of Montenegro. (p. 15)</p>
Serbia	<p>Concerning freedom of association, the new law on associations has not yet been adopted. It was prepared with wide public consultation, involving the civil sector and relevant international organisations. Civil society organisations are well developed and active. The authorities have made efforts to take the opinions of the civil sector on board, notably in the area of poverty reduction. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are allowed to attend sessions in Parliament. The Serbian Office for European Integration has signed a special memorandum of cooperation with NGOs. However, the administration continues to show insufficient understanding of the appropriate role of NGOs in a democratic society. NGO activities that imply criticism of the government, and in particular those that draw attention to sensitive, often unpopular issues such as war crimes, are publicly denigrated. The legal situation of civil society organisations remains precarious due to the continued lack of adequate legislation. This has a consequent effect on financial sustainability. (P. 13)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations continue to play a key and active role in Serbia. They maintain regular internal dialogue and cooperate on a wide range of civic initiatives. However, the regulatory environment for civil society organisations is deficient. There has been a lasting legal vacuum concerning NGO financing, including restrictive and unfavourable fiscal conditions applied on an ad hoc and arbitrary basis. There have been cases of public denigration and attacks against NGO activists dealing with sensitive issues, in particular war crimes and the fight against organised crime. The perpetrators have not been brought to justice. ... Overall, progress has been made on civil and political rights. The new constitution contains provisions in this area, however implementation and enforcement needs to be developed in order to improve the overall climate in which civil and political rights can be exercised. (p. 13)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations continue to play a major role in social, economic and political life in Serbia. However, longstanding legislative deficiencies have not been adequately addressed. These concern the legal status of NGOs and their financing, including restrictive and unfavourable fiscal conditions applied on an ad hoc and arbitrary basis. A number of NGOs, in particular human rights defenders, were subjected to threats and verbal abuse for holding diverging views on issues such as the situation in Kosovo. Such incidents have not been fully investigated. (p. 16)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations play an active part in the social, economic and political life of Serbia and have provided an invaluable contribution to the democratic transition in the country. Human rights defenders have played a key role in raising awareness of civil and political rights, positively influencing public policy and fighting impunity. The new Law on Associations adopted in July 2009 has clarified the legal status of NGOs. There have been some improvements within the Serbian administration to cooperate with civil society. However, cooperation remains mainly ad hoc and selective. NGOs, in particular human rights defenders, were once again victims of threats and verbal abuse for holding diverging views on issues such as Kosovo and the fight against impunity. (p. 15)</p>

Kosovo	<p>No major changes since the last report occurred in terms of the capacity and influence of the local civil society organisations. (P.13)</p>	<p>Regarding CSOs, the NGO registration and liaison unit is responsible, together with the Ministry of public services, for the registration and supervision of CSOs. According to the registry, there are more than 3,000 civil society organisations exist in Kosovo. Only civil society organisations with a public benefit status are monitored and are required to submit annual reports on their activities and financial status. There are currently around 270 such NGOs. A Kosovo branch of a Serbian NGO dealing with minority return opened an office in Pristina for the first time. In September 2007 the killing of a police officer led to a protest march against crime and corruption that was organised by civil society organisations. About one third of the CSOs have ethnically mixed staff, including the Civil Society Network in Mitrovica. However, there are believed to be far fewer active NGOs than registered NGOs. The landscape of civil society organisations consists of rather small organisations which are often dependant on short-term funding from a single donor. CSOs are mainly ethnically exclusive and there continues to be almost no co-operation between ethnically divided NGOs in Kosovo. The administrative, financial, and managerial capacities of CSOs are very uneven, and are particularly poor at municipal level, which obstructs their development. Co-operation between the authorities and CSOs remains uneven. Overall, almost no progress was made in this area. CSOs remain weak. (p. 16-17)</p>	<p>More than 4,600 civil society organisations are registered with the Ministry of Public Services (MPS), the vast majority of which are local. 529 registered NGOs are active in the area of minority rights and seventeen of these have multi-ethnic staff. The MPS NGO registration and liaison unit is monitoring 280 civil society organisations that have public benefit status and are entitled to financial support from the Kosovo consolidated budget. Some NGOs continue to be active in bridge building between communities. Significant efforts are being made to transfer expertise from international to local NGOs by means of partnerships and direct support to the establishment and functioning of local NGOs. However, most civil society organisations are small and depend on short-term funding from mainly foreign single donors. This means that the civil society agenda is largely donor-driven. The government does not have a strategic approach for its interaction with civil society organisations. Overall, civil society remains weak. (p. 19)</p>	<p>The freedom of association and assembly is guaranteed under the Constitution. The Law on Freedom of Association in Non-Governmental Organisations was adopted in February. The Law on Public Gatherings was adopted in December 2008. Civil society continues to depend mostly on international funding, leading to project-based and donor-driven agendas with limited sustainability and long-term strategic positioning. The monitoring capacity of NGOs is limited, their participation in the legislation process poor. Overall, civil society has developed further but the environment, in which it operates needs to be significantly improved. (p. 14)</p>
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