



NEWSLETTER 46

NOVEMBER 2011- JANUARY 2012

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Dear members and partners,

We have again the pleasure to share with you the newest edition of our Newsletter. In it, you can find all activities that marked the end of a busy 2011 as well activities planned for 2012. We hope you had a joyful holiday season and we wish you success for the upcoming year. We are using this occasion to announce that the Executive office has moved to a new location in Skopje and we hope that this New Year will begin with lots of new prospects for cooperation and joint ventures.

PAST ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

CIVIL SOCIETY LOST IN TRANSLATION, POLICY WORKSHOP: BCSDN ONCE AGAIN BRINGS LOCAL VOICE TO EU INSTITUTIONS

On 22nd November, BCSDN in cooperation with the GMF office in Brussels organized a policy workshop in Brussels "Civil Society Lost in Translation? Donor Strategies and Practices in Support of Civil Society Development in the Balkans". 50 participants from EU Institutions and Brussels based civil society shared opinions with BCSDN members on sustainable strategies and practices for a viable civil society. The workshop launched research findings among main donors present in the region revealing that the EU is the main actor driving the donor agenda and the volume of funding, but is not yet fully utilizing this hegemonic role. Also, the research showed that the problem does not lay in the donor priorities, but in the methodology used to support civil society, i.e. the lack of long-term core funding support esp. by the EU and other multilateral donors. The debate focused on the funding trends to civil society in the Balkans and strategies that can be employed to provide for continued and sustainable development of civil society in the region. The [Background Paper](#), the [Research Findings Summary](#) as well as the [photos](#) and a [video](#) from the event. The donor maps are available [here](#), while the full research publication will be available in the following week.

SLOVAK BALKAN PUBLIC POLICY FUND: GRANTEES SELECTED

The first call for proposal for Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro of the Slovak – Balkan Public Policy Fund (SBPPF) has been closed on 30th November. 113 applications were received. December was devoted to review of the application the Evaluation Board (consisted of BCSDN members and Slovak experts). Grantees were informed mid January and will sign grant contracts in February



CSOs demanded a strategic and equal partnership in programming, implementing and evaluating EU assistance.

when they will be formally announced. BCSDN members will host trainings for grantees in the end of February.

GLOBAL & REGIONAL INITIATIVES

MIXED ASSESSMENTS ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS ON AID EFFECTIVENESS



The 4th High Level Forum (HLF4) on Aid Effectiveness took place in Busan, South Korea, from 29th November to 1st December to review the progress in the effectiveness of aid delivery. Before the start of the actual Forum, civil society groups gathered in Busan for the Global Civil Society Forum, where [“Better Aid and Development Effectiveness for the World We Want”](#) representing more than 20,000 CSOs was developed. On the meeting, 18 representatives from a wide group of stakeholders reached agreement on the [Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#). This declaration for the first time establishes an agreed framework for development cooperation that embraces traditional donors, South-South cooperators, the BRICs, CSOs and private founders. Five fundamental principles have been set out to make aid more effective: ownership (developing countries are responsible for their development strategies), alignment (donor countries align to these strategies), harmonization (donor countries coordinate and simplify aid procedures), results, and mutual accountability. Although civil society representatives were proud to be part of the newly forged global partnership for the first time, they recognize that they had to compromise especially since the final commitments were only voluntary. BCSDN and some of its members actively participated to the Open Forum for CSO Effectiveness which led to development of a joint CSO negotiating position in Busan by among other organizing a regional consultation workshop for Balkan CSOs in Skopje on February 28-March. More information on the Forum can be found [here](#).

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) INITIATIVE GAINING MOMENTUM

Several new countries (Denmark, Paraguay, Armenia, Greece) have joined the OGP since its launch in September, 2011, making it now a 50-country initiative devoted to raising government openness, standards of transparency and citizen participation. The initiative is mainly engaging in government to government peer-exchange as all member countries are gearing up to submission of action plans on 31st January, which need to be developed in cooperation with CSOs. The [OGP annual meeting](#) will take place between 18th and 18th April in Brasilia, Brazil. Participants will include high-level representatives from OGP's 50 member governments, civil society, the private sector, and the media. At this

All parties have committed to develop a “light working framework” for the Global Partnership till June 2012 with backing of OCDE and UNDP as responsible implementing bodies.



OGP was born out of President's Obama Open Government Initiative issued on the 20th January 2009.



meeting, all 42 new OGP member countries will present their country action plans, the 8 additional Steering Committee countries will share their progress to date, and all participants will join in thematic discussions and have the chance to input into OGP's overall strategic vision for the future. Application for participation by CSOs is opened by 6th February. Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Romania have joined the initiative from the Balkan region. OGP is supporting the participation of CSOs at the April 2012 meeting. Resources are allocated for 50 representatives from OGP countries and 50-70 self financed regional/international CSOs representatives can participate.

ADVOCACY

BCSDN CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING EC-CSO DIALOGUE THROUGH EXISTING MECHANISMS

Tanja Hafner Ademi, the Executive Director of BCSDN was a guest speaker at the RCC & TACSO "Regional CSOs Networks in IPA Countries" on the topic of "Regional Networks' Best Practices and Challenges". Her [presentation](#) focused on the possibilities and success offered by regional networks in EU advocacy on the example of BCSDN. Based on the experience of network, she presented two ways in which the existing formal and informal networks can be better used by the Commission. The expertise and knowledge they possess can improve regional monitoring of different Acquis areas and IPA Multi-beneficiary programming. Regional CSO network present a unique communication and dissemination partner for timely, effective communication of EU accession-process related reforms and benefits for citizens. For both to take place, existing dialogue structures and procedures, such as the [EU Minimum Standards of Consultations](#), [Your Voice in Europe](#) portal and IPA CSF/TACSO structures such as the Programming Committee could be used.



BCSDN MEETS WITH THE COMMISSION IPA CSF TEAM

BCSDN Executive Director and Venera Hajrullahu as Board member had a meeting with the EC civil society team represented by Yngve Engstroem, Head of Unit for Regional Programming in the DG Enlargement on 21st of November. The Commission is ready to work in a partnership relationship with regional networks equally to the EU networks. Politicizing of the IPA civil society money by national Governments is the main reason for the Commission's decision on IPA CSF bringing together both national and regional programmes aims at giving the DG Enlargement and EU Delegations the possibility to directly and more flexibility support civil society (similar to EIDHR approach), while still allowing Governments to use IPA programmes to fund and building capacity of and for civil society in the country under the decentralized management (DIS), i.e. grant schemes, capacity-building of Offices for Cooperation with NGOs and



Iliana Nesik, BCSDN Project and Communication Manager attended the CONCORD WG EPAN meeting and Development and Democracy in EU External Policy event in Warsaw, 16th-17th November, where BCSDN position was presented in the discussion on the EU's Neighborhood CSF.

line ministries. TACSO will remain a technical assistance project, but different modalities are possible to allow sustainability and local ownership.

BCSDN POSITION ON IPA CSF INFLUENCES EVOLUTION OF THE EU'S NEIGHBORHOOD CSF

After presentation of its work to Caucasus organizations in Batumi, Georgia in September, 2011, the network continued sharing of its experience and lessons-learned from IPA Civil Society Facility. Most notable are the [CONCORD Statement on the Neighborhood Civil Society Facility](#) (BCSDN is a member of its WG Enlargement, Pre-accession and Neighborhood) and the policy brief by OSI Brussels "[From Founder to Partner? Prospects for the European Neighborhood Policy's Civil Society Facility](#)". Both reflect the same concerns and principles the EU needs to support when working with civil society in the Neighborhood region, which BCSDN has presented in among other the [Blueprint for the Future of the IPA CSF](#) in July 2010 (e.g. invest in existing structures & networks to provide for ownership and sustainability beyond the support, coherence between policy and funding support and cost-effectiveness). Just recently, our recommendations have also become integral part of the Thematic Evaluation of EU's Support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey commissioned by DG Enlargement for the needs of future planning of IPA support to civil society.

JOINT INITIATIVES & EXCHANGE

BCSDN has submitted a project proposal on the bridging the gap between global and regional civil participation standards and national practice in the Balkans under the UNDEF call for proposals. The proposal is a joint effort by the Executive office and its members in Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The project has two-fold approach: analysis and advocacy on functioning of existing citizen's participation mechanisms and one-stop shop for citizens and CSOs. If successful, the project will be implemented between January, 2013 and December, 2014.

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In December, MCIC and CNVOS have been awarded with a grant by the EIDHR instrument for the project: Government Mirror: Public Participation in Legislation Preparation Procedures. BCSDN is also a partner to project with the aim to organize a regional exchange workshop on the methodologies and experience in the Balkans on monitoring of public participation.

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In joint partnership with the Croatian and Serbian Office for Cooperation with NGOs, BCSDN was been awarded a small grant from the Global Forum on Civil Society Law, Legal Innovation Fund. The project "Regional partnership for



enabling legal environment for civil society development” will be implemented between February and August 2012. The project aim is to develop a common assessment framework, a tool for EU, national governments and CSOs.

NETWORK BODIES

2012 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING



BCSDN Next Council Meeting will take place in Split hosted by Cenzura Plus

BCSDN would like to announce that the next annual Council Meeting will take place in Split, Croatia at the end of April. Please save the preliminary dates in your calendar: 26th and 27th of April. Among the topics on the agenda will be the mid-term strategy and the changes to the Statute, all documents will be available for consultation in advance.

BOARD – DELIBERATION ON THE MANAGEMENT MODEL

On its 4th session held on 16th December, the Board agreed that the network should move to a new management model. Since this constitutes a new situation, a change to the Statute is needed, while testing the functioning of the new model, i.e. independent Executive office and its staff will start with 1st January, 2012. An evaluation of the current management model whereby the network was managed by a member organization as the Host institution – MCIC (incl. direct, indirect staff and services) was performed by the Board during the summer with the aim to assess the 2 year experience since formalization of the network. The assessment was discussed at the mid-term strategy workshop held in Prishtina on 4th October alongside proposal from the Executive Director on changes to the model. In the consecutive weeks, the Board debated on several occasions the pros and cons about the needed changes to the model based esp. on criteria of financial viability and independence of work by executive staff and it finally reached the decision that the best way for the network to continue to grow and develop is through an independent office outside of any member organization.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE - NEW CONTACT DETAILS

The new contact details of the Executive office are:

Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)

Bel Kamen Street no. 6/8

1000-Skopje

Macedonia

Tel./fax: + 389 (0)2 614 42 11

E-mails and mobile contacts of Executive office staff remain the same.



ANNOUNCEMENT BOARD

2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE: EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE: ON THE STARTING LINE, BRUSSELS, 20 MARCH

The first ever EC citizens initiatives for transnational deliberative democracy will start on 1 April 2012. In terms of Article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty and the regulation to bring it into effect, from that date initiatives will be registered. The citizens' committee and coalition of organizers will then have 12 months to collect 1 million signatures for a proposal to the Commission to introduce legislation within its competence from a minimum of 7 countries. Is this an answer to bridge the gap between citizens and the EU? ECAS and Democracy International are organizing the conference "European Citizens' Initiatives: on the starting line" which will take place on the 20th March in Brussels. This event will build on the first annual conference on ECI of 17th March 2011, "Getting European Citizens' Initiatives started". The conference will feature prominent speakers from the Institutions, academia and civil society. A particular emphasis will be given civil society efforts to make this tool become alive on a local, regional, national and transnational level. For more information click [here](#).

BALKAN PEER EXCHANGE: ENHANCING ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH-BASED ADVOCACY IN AN ERA OF OPEN DATA, BELGRADE, 21-23 FEBRUARY

Think Tank Fund together with the Human Rights Governance Grants Program and Foundation for Open Society Serbia, European Fund for the Balkans, Balkan Trust for Democracy of the German Marshall Fund and the National Endowment for Democracy is organizing the event Balkan Peer Exchange, Enhancing Analysis and Research-Based Advocacy in an Era of Open Data, that will take place from 21st to 23rd February in Belgrade. The event aspires to bring a representative group of think tanks and advocacy organizations as well as donors to address these issues and open new avenues for future cooperation. The overall objective of the Peer Exchange is to provide a space for representatives of 50 think tanks and advocacy organizations (with established track records in policy relevant research) and a dozen of donors active in the region and offer them a space for peer-to-peer exchange of practices, positive and negative lessons learned and brainstorming on new innovative ideas. You can read more and apply for the event [here](#).