



## E-Mail Alerts no. 308

\*\*\* BCSDN wishes you a happy and prosperous 2015! \*\*\*

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- **Report on Donors Strategies and Practices Paints a Bleak Picture on How Civil Society is Supported in Balkan Countries**

The first in-depth report “**Donor Strategies and Practices for Supporting Civil Society in the Western Balkans**” developed by BCSDN and Queen Mary University of London research and academic team uncovers basic elements and principles on which support to civil society by foreign donors rests and which need to be challenged to strengthen the potential and role civil society has in current Balkan societies.

Publication is based on 84 in-depth face-to-face interviews with key donors in the region and provides an insight in the international donors’ relation towards civil society in the Western Balkans, rationales and motivations for their presence, mechanisms they employ in supporting CSOs, as well as the perception of civil society in the countries in the region and its value. More specifically, the research offers an overview of the country specific assistance available to civil society together with modalities of its planning and ways of programming. Finally, the report presents a set of conclusions and offers a series of recommendations in light of the broader political context in the region, including the need to challenge dominance of instrumentalized approach to civil society support, inclusion of civil society actors in planning and designing aid modalities, and tackling transparency and accountability of state funding for civil society as an important and long term source of support. The research work conducted is based on a **2011 quantitative study** that identified key donors and analyzed their basic approaches in supporting civil society in the Western Balkan countries. The full report is available for download at this [link](#).

[BCSDN]



- **The Top 20 Donors of 2014**

The City A.M. World Charity Index 2014 has ranked the top 20 international foundations, which gave the largest grants for charitable causes around the world this year. United States dominates the list with 13 of its foundations providing billions of euros in grant. The United Kingdom has three international donors while countries like the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Germany have one each in this list. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation tops the list as the number one grant-giving organization around the world with £2.16 billion worth of grants given out just this year. The second position goes to the UK’s Wellcome Trust, which has given more than £580 million for medical and biomedical research. The Netherlands-based Novamedia/Postcode Lotteries is in the third position for giving away £470 million for social and development causes around the world. Find out who are the others who donated most this year [here](#).

[Funds for NGOs]



- **Albanian Parliament Passes Resolution on Role of Civil Society**

On 24th December, the Albanian Parliament passed a Resolution on recognition and strengthening the role of civil society in the process of democratic development of the country, in which commitments include development of a transparent and comprehensive consultation process with civil society and stakeholders in accordance with the Law on Notification and Public Consultation, and encourage and support initiatives aimed at strengthening and promoting cooperation between civil society and public institutions, esp. at local level. A key positive development present support to legislative initiatives aimed at improving the legal framework for civil society development and establishment of mechanisms and clear procedures for representation of civil society in the decision making process, i.e. civil society council as well as support to legislative initiatives to strengthen the independence, transparency and efficiency of the Agency for Promotion of Civil Society, as well as its role to facilitate the process of cooperation between civil society and Government. The full text of the Resolution is available [here](#) (in Albanian only).

[Partners Albania]

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- **Macedonian Civil Society Demands Establishment of Well-designed and Inclusive Council and Complete Reform of the State Funding System**

On 19th December, BCSDN together with MCIC, and with the support of 57 CSOs representatives, sent comments and proposals on the two bylaw drafts concerning the establishment of Council for cooperation and dialogue with CSO and conditions of state financing in the form of an integral letter to the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Unit for Cooperation with NGOs. These comments and proposals were gathered during a consultation meeting with CSOs organized by BCSDN in cooperation with MCIC on 15th December in Skopje. In the letter sent to the Unit for cooperation with NGOs, CSOs' representatives demand an extension of the online consultation period for the two bylaw drafts until the end of January 2015. Moreover, CSOs demand active public presentation of the two key draft decisions by officials, so more CSOs could be informed and give their opinion, comments and proposals on their content. CSOs recommend a complete reform of the system of state financing, and that the conditions of state financing for CSOs become a matter of competence, analysis and discussion of the new Council, after its establishment. More information on the comments and proposals can be read [here](#).

[BCSDN]



- **Joint Guidelines of the Venice Commission and OSCE ODIHR on Freedom of Association**

At its 101st Plenary Session, taking place on the 12th-13th December in Venice, the Venice Commission and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on Freedom of Association (OSCE ODIHR) adopted the Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association. The Guidelines on Freedom of Association have been developed to further the goal of implementing the right to freedom of association. The added value of this document is that it incorporates the long-standing and in-depth expertise of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) in providing legislative assistance in matters pertaining to the right to freedom of association. These Guidelines are also intended for use primarily by legislators, but also to serve public authorities, the judiciary, legal practitioners and others concerned with the exercise of the right to freedom of association, including associations and their members. In addition, the present Guidelines serve as an "umbrella" document in relation to already existing OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission guidelines addressing political parties and religious organizations, as well as for the general public. More

information is available [here](#).

[Council of Europe]



- **Winners of the 2014 Philanthropy Award in Albania Announced**

For the fourth year, Partners Albania (PA) has organized the Philanthropy Award to express gratitude to individuals, families and businesses who contribute to improving the quality of life in the society. The organization encouraged all social actors to submit their nominations for individuals or entities in Albania who give their contribution in benefit of the community and its development at the national and local level. On 5th December, PA organized a ceremony gala where the winners were announced. The winners of the Philanthropy Award 2014 are: CREDINS Bank - Award for Business Entities Contributing at the National Level; ALB-STAR Company - Award for Business Entities Contributing at the Local Level; Mr. Emiliano Lule - Award for the Individual Contribution; Mr. Tef Pogu (posthumously) - Special Award - Pioneer of Philanthropy; and Mrs. Claudia Janiszewski, OSAAB - Certificate of Appreciation. More information is available [here](#).

[Partners Albania]



- **Enlargement Process Crucial to the EU - Council Conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process**

The General Affairs Council meeting on 16 December adopted conclusions on the EU enlargement process and on the role of the Council in safeguarding rule of law. The meeting also dealt with preparations for the upcoming European Council. According to the EU ministers, EU enlargement remains a vital and defining policy of the EU. In their conclusions, EU ministers stressed the importance for nations hoping to join the Union to keep the momentum for necessary economic and institutional reforms, but also to keep their commitment to respect EU fundamental values such as the freedom of expression and the media. EU ministers also indicated the importance for these countries to progressively align with the EU's foreign policy positions, notably on issues where major common interests are at stake, such as on Russia and Ukraine. The full Council conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process are available for download at this [link](#).

[Council of the European Union]



- **Launch of Civil Society Europe in Rome**

Major European CSOs joined in Rome on 16th December for the creation of Civil Society Europe. Thirty European Networks are already supportive of this initiative aiming to establish a permanent coordination of the organised civil society at EU-level, a place for horizontal dialogue and a strong voice for effective advocacy in favour of policy changes that address the transversal issues of Equality, Solidarity, Inclusiveness and Democracy which should be at the heart of the European project. Civil Society Europe's objective is to create an enabling environment for horizontal exchanges between civil society organisations and movements across Europe. It aims to provide a common and permanent space to share experience and knowledge, scale up campaigns and other forms of collective action and strengthen the capacity of its members to connect people in the diversity of their democratic forms of expression to act for change around our shared values. More information is available [here](#).

[Civic-Forum]



- **CfP: Creative Force Programme 2015 (Deadline: 21.01.2015)**

The Swedish Institute's Creative Force programme has opened its first call for applications for 2015 and welcomes applications for the funding of both seed and collaborative projects that aim to promote human rights, transparency and democracy with the aid of initiatives which use either culture or the media as a method for achieving change. The programme is open to projects implemented in Sweden or in one or more of the programme countries (Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey). Seed funding of up to SEK 100,000 (approx. EUR 10,500) is available for small-scale projects, project start-ups and planning trips, while funding for collaborative projects, amounting to maximum SEK 300,000/year (approx. EUR 31,500) is available for larger-scale initiatives with a maximum duration of 24 month. Applicants may be CSOs, foundations, public sector agencies, private sector agencies or other professional actors. The application deadline is 21st January, 2015. More information is available [here](#).

[Swedish Institute]



- **CfP: EIDHR Country-Based Support Scheme for BiH, Macedonia and Montenegro (Deadline: 30.01; 02.02; 27.02.2015)**

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) global objective is to support the promotion, development and consolidation of democracy and rule of law as well as the respect for human rights worldwide. EIDHR aims to contribute to an increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to promote democratic reforms in third countries through supporting CSOs. Therefore, the specific objective of the Country-Based Support Schemes (CBSS) is to support civil society and human rights defenders in third countries working on human rights (political, civil, economic, social and cultural), and democratization. At the moment there are three CBSS Calls for Proposals open in the region – **BiH** (grants size: EUR 100,000-200,000), **Macedonia** (grants size: EUR 61,000-120,000) and **Montenegro** (grants size: EUR 50,000-150,000). The deadlines for submission of Concept notes are 30th January, 2nd February and 27th February 2015, respectively. The full application packages for all three Calls are available at this [link](#).

[EuropeanAid]



- **CfP: Democracy Commission Small Grants Program - Montenegro (Deadline: 04.01.2015)**

The United States Embassy in Podgorica supports specific projects and initiatives that facilitate the development of democracy and democratic institutions in Montenegro through grant awards of up to USD 24,000. Grants are awarded to local CSOs, media, or other organizations that have displayed organizational skill and trustworthiness. In 2015, the Commission is interested in projects that support democratic development and human rights. Possible topics may include: promoting the rights of disabled persons, refugees, the LGBT community, domestic violence victims, and/or other disadvantaged groups; women's empowerment in business and politics; youth leadership; bolstering rule of law and combating corruption and organized crime; media freedom; environmental protection; and other topics. The Commission is also interested in projects that support an open, constructive and well informed public debate on NATO, including the requirements, responsibilities and benefits of the membership as well as information regarding the reforms that are needed for Montenegro to meet the Alliance's membership criteria. For more info visit the official website. Deadline for submission of proposals is 4th January, 2015. More information is available [here](#).

[US Embassy in Podgorica]



- **CfP: EWI - Women Moving Mountains (Deadline: 30.01.2015)**

Ecumenical Women's Initiative (EWI) as part of its grant-making programme is pleased to announce a new public call for innovative project proposals by women-led CSOs and women theologians/students of theology from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in the fields of peacebuilding and reconciliation, women's human rights and faith-based ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue

and cooperation. EWI supports innovative initiatives in which women are change makers in society and in faith communities and is committed to strengthening relationships and cross-border cooperation. Two types of support are planned through this Call - project support of up to EUR 3,000 (6,000 for existing EWI partners/grantees) and institutional support of up to EUR 3,000 only for existing EWI partners/grantees. Maximum number of grants to be awarded is 15 and the deadline for submission of proposals is 30th January, 2014. For more detailed information, please visit the following [website](#).

[Ecumenical Women's Initiative]



- **CfP: Small Grants Supporting Local CSO Networks - Macedonia (Deadline: 19.01.2015)**

The Metamorphosis Foundation has published a call for proposals within the framework of the project "Network of NGOs for effective active participation", which is conducted in partnership with the Macedonian Center for European Training (MCET), and with financial assistance from the EU through the program "Support for strengthening, sustainability and development of active civil society". The open call seeks proposals for projects to support actions of CSO networks. The Foundation will provide support for local projects of networks of CSOs in Macedonia by delivering 6 small grants in the amount of EUR 1,500 to 2,500 in order to actively involve citizens in the local government in Skopje, Tetovo, Debar, Veles, Stip and Strumica. The purpose of the grant is to support the implementation of local initiatives for solving specific problems in communities through using new technologies for active citizen participation with active working connection with the local self-government bodies and other stakeholders. Deadline for submission of proposals is 19th January, 2015. More information about this Call is available at this [link](#).

[Metamorphosis Foundation]



- **CfA: The Open Society Foundations Civil Society Scholar Awards for Doctoral Students and Faculty Members (Deadline: 02.03.2015)**

The Open Society Foundations Civil Society Scholar Awards (CSSA) supports international academic mobility offering doctoral students and university faculty to access resources that enrich socially engaged research and critical scholarship in their home country or region. The CSSA is open for doctoral students and full-time faculty members in select developing countries. Applications can be made for 2 to 10 months-long projects, in the period between 1st August 2015 and 31st August 2016. Maximum financial support for doctoral students is limited to USD 10,000 and for faculty members to USD 15,000. The deadline for submission of all required documents is 2nd March, 2015. More details about the application procedure are available [here](#).

[Open Society Foundation]



- **ESI Newsletter: Pessimism and Protest in Bulgaria – Illusions in Bosnia – Books in Kosovo**

2014 was a year of protests: from Ukraine to Bulgaria, from Bosnia to Macedonia. Some protests had dramatic consequences: in Ukraine, after snipers took aim at a crowd of demonstrators, the president fled the country and a new era began. Other protests triggered early elections, as in Bulgaria. And some protests, such as those in Bosnia, made headlines for only a moment, changing almost nothing. The European Stability Initiative (ESI) has reflected on these events in its latest newsletter, available at the following [link](#).

[European Stability Initiative]



- **The Art of Advocacy: Practical Strategies for an Effective Campaign**

The e-course Art of Advocacy is a self-placed learning experience that guides students through key components of an advocacy campaign. The 90 minute training is designed as an easy-to-access resource for local level advocacy efforts by USAID staff, field practitioners, implementing partners, local organizations and activists. Through the lens of OTI's Advocacy Index and with the weight of three years of field experimentation, the training shares lessons learned and tools on five key components of the advocacy process and provides insights into how to create and conduct an advocacy assessment. The training was funded by USAID through the Knowledge-Driven Microenterprise Development (KDMD) project in partnership with TechChange. More information is available [here](#).

[TechChange]



- **One-Stop-Shop for CSO Development Effectiveness Tools and Resources**

The CSO Development Effectiveness Web Portal is an open online platform where civil society practitioners interested in and working towards improving the impact of their work in development, can access and share tools, resources and case studies with others also working on improving their effectiveness. This site enables searching for ideas and examples from CSO practitioners, uploading personal contributions, and rating the tools for implementing a particular aspect of the CSO Development Effectiveness agenda. The basis for this work comes from the International Framework for CSO Development, developed by and for civil society organisations around the world. The two cornerstones of this framework include the Principles for CSO development effectiveness, and the minimum conditions for an enabling environment, both of which can be explored on this [web portal](#).

[CSO Wiki]



- **How to Write a Successful Project Proposal?**

The Solidar Suisse/ Swiss Labour Assistance in Serbia published a brief guide for writing project proposals. It contains a summary of how to write good, concise project proposals in order to help the people how create and develop their own proposals. The focus is on explaining in details two types of project proposals: opportunistic and program proposal. Also, one can find a few tips on what should be done before writing a project proposal and examples that are helpful for producing a proposal that is clear, accurate, and focused. The complete publication is available at the following [link](#).

[Solidar Suisse]




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