E-Mail Alerts no. 320

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- **Lajčák: Weight of V4 Grows in Eyes of Foreign Partners**
  Slovakia's Visegrad Four (V4: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) presidency expires this month. In hindsight, Foreign and European Affairs Minister Miroslav Lajčák is convinced it was an extremely dynamic term, during which, some 140 events associating both politicians and experts were organised. The V4 followed up on the inter-regional dialogue with countries of the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership, Scandinavian and Baltic states. Following the example set by V4, Balkan partner countries have committed to strengthening regional cooperation and establishing the Western Balkans Fund, based in Tirana. More information is available **here**.
  [Slovak Spectator]
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- **Civil Society in Montenegro Demands Minimum 1% of the Annual State Budget for Financing CSOs and Decentralized Selection of Priority Areas for Financing**
  The working group for preparation of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on NGOs met on 27th and 28th May, 2015, to discuss the draft prepared by the Ministry of Interior, as well as the proposals submitted by the CSO Coalition "Cooperation Towards the Goal" ("Saradnjom do Cilja") and the Association of Artists of Montenegro during the preliminary consultation phase. Amendments to the draft were adopted with certain corrections of the text and took into consideration the opinions of civil society representatives regarding the financing of CSOs projects and activities from the state budget, and selecting priority areas for financing. CSO representatives suggested that the state funding for CSO projects should be at least 1% of the budget of Montenegro on an annual basis, and that the priorities for financing projects and programs of public interest should be determined at the level of ministries and state authorities, while including CSOs not only in the program implementation, but also in the priority (programming) identification. More information is available **here**.
  [CRNVO]
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- **Slovenia: Participate in Drafting of the Strategy for CSO Development and Volunteering**
The Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration, in collaboration with CSOs, is preparing the Draft Strategy for development of CSOs and volunteering. The process started in April with the national conference in which starting points for the strategy were set. Participation in the preparation of the strategy is one of the priorities of the Government Council for the promotion of volunteering, voluntary organizations and CSOs, and therefore it was decided that two working groups will be established (one for CSO development and other for the field of volunteering) and they will convene for the first time from 7th to 9th July 2015, in an open method - open for everyone interested. The strategy will outline the future government measures for development of the CSO sector, it is important that the measures are based on consultations will all interested stakeholders. Preparation of the strategy is expected to run until March 2016. More information is available **here**.
[CNVOS]
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- **The Monitoring Matrix Inspiration for Civil Society Platforms around the World**
On 17th June, Tanja Hafner Ademi, the Executive Director of BCSDN, presented the Monitoring Matrix for Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development at the CIVICUS-AGNA "Workshop on Civic Space Monitoring and Enabling Environment" held in Istanbul, Turkey. The aim of the workshop was to reflect on civil society led tools in the assessment of enabling environment and civic space and how to use their results for advocacy and policy influencing. The 17 representatives of national civil society associations from all continents discussed and agreed that key challenges for civil society around the globe lie in authorities narrowing space for basic freedoms of association, assembly and expression, but also that CSOs face common long-term term challenges such as occupation of civil society by GONGOs. More information is available **here**.
[BCSDN]
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- **ECtHR: Right to Access Information is an Essential Part of Free Expression**
ARTICLE19 have submitted a third party intervention to the European Court of Human Rights regarding the case of MAGYAR HELSINKI BIZOTTSÁG v HUNGARY. The core issue raised is the right of the public to obtain information held by public bodies, arguing that the right of access to information is a fundamental human right, and thus any restrictions on it must be necessary and proportionate, and any privacy exemptions must meet those tests. More information is available **here**.
[ARTICLE19]
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- **CIVICUS Civil Society Watch: CS Rights Violated in 96 Countries**
A new global report by CIVICUS finds that rights of civil society were violated in almost half of the world's 193 countries in 2014. In particular, the report draws attention to the systematic assault on Freedom of Association, Expression and Assembly. The CIVICUS Civil Society Watch Report shows that core civil society freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly were violated to a significant degree in at least 96 countries during 2014. More information is available **here**.
[CIVICUS]
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- **Balkan Public Policy Fund Grantees Announced**
BCSDN and its members are proud to announce the successful applicants for funding under the Balkan Public Policy Fund Programme. Out of 47 submitted project proposals from organizations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, 12 proposals were selected for funding (2 per

country). BCSDN and its partners are convinced that the selection conducted by an evaluation committee, composed of experts civil society development from BCSDN members, have great advocacy potential and have potential for real impact in the field of their work. The awarded organizations will produce a policy paper and will receive continuous support in the implementation of the project by BCSDN and its member organizations. More information on the selected applicants and their projects is available **here**.

[BCSDN]

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- **Civil Society to Have a Central Role in Overcoming the Current Political Crisis in Macedonia, Says the Report on Systematic Rule of Law Issues by EC-Recruited Senior Experts' Group**

  In light of the political crisis in Macedonia, the European Commission recruited a group of independent senior rule of law experts to carry out an analysis of the situation and provide recommendations to address the issues. Among other findings and recommendations, the report "noted the commitment of several NGOs engaged in promoting democratic standards in particular in relation to free elections, free media, proper oversight of the intelligence services and an independent judiciary". The expert group highlights that "these organisations as well as state institutions like the Ombudsman, the State Election Commission or the Directorate for Personal Data Protection can and should play a central role in overcoming the current crisis by addressing shortcomings in an open, transparent and constructive manner". It furthermore emphasizes that none of these public or non-governmental bodies should be pressured not to exercise their mandate and tasks to the full extent of their responsibilities. The full report, published by the European Commission can be found **here**.

  [BCSDN]

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- **TSI Project Brings together EU Statistical Institutions to Improve Stats for Non-Profit Sector**

  Third Sector Impact (TSI) and DG Research and Innovation organized a meeting on 1st June in Brussels, to discuss the potential uses of data on the third sector in EU policy with European Commission officials and to define the elements of an EU agenda for civil society-related statistical data. In addition, the event sought the active involvement of national statistical agencies in implementing the new procedures available to begin making the key components of the third sector visible in European statistics, with an outlook to expand data on other components of the third sector over time. BCSDN has facilitated the participation of Serbian Business Register Agency representative and is working with TSI project to share experience and knowledge on the civil society related data from Enlargement countries. More information is available **here**.

  [TSI]

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- **UN Special Rapporteur Calls for Binding Human Rights Treaty for Corporations**

  The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, called for a new treaty binding businesses to respect fundamental human rights, and for States and corporations to fully engage with CSOs in the context of natural resource exploitation. The Special Rapporteur called upon States to enact a legally binding human rights instrument that applies to all corporations, regardless of their size or geographical scope, because they play an outsized role in the decision-making processes about exploitation of natural resources, but are not subject to legally binding human rights obligations. More information is available **here**.

  [Freeassembly.net]

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- **CfP: Small Grants for Roma CSOs in Macedonia (Deadline: 15.07.2015)**
  InSoK and MCIC have announced a Call for Proposals for small grants for Roma CSOs working in advocacy and lobying. The aim of this Call is to provide support for Roma CSOs that work in promoting cooperation with institutions on local and national level through advocacy and lobbying, in order to adequately respond to the needs and problems of the Roma community in Macedonia. The overall indicative amount made available under this CfP is USD 25,000 while an individual grant falls between USD 3,000 and 5,000. The planned project duration should not be lower than 3 months, nor exceed 5 months. The deadline for applications submission is 15th July, 2015. More information is available **here**.
  [MCIC]
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- **CfP: IPA Cross-Border Program Serbia and Montenegro 2012-2013 3rd Call (Deadline: 18.08.2015)**
  The EU Delegations to Serbia and to Montenegro announced the 3rd call for proposals in the framework of the IPA Cross-Border Program 2012-2013 in the following areas: (1.1) Improving the productivity and competitiveness of the area's economic, rural, cultural and environmental resources; (1.2) Cross-border initiatives targeting the exchange of ideas, between people, to enhance the professional and civic society cooperation. The overall indicative amount made available under this CfP is EUR 2,160,000, and any grant requested must fall between EUR 60,000 and 250,000, with minimum 50% and maximum 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 12 months nor exceed 18 months. The deadline for submission of concept notes is 18th August, 2015. The full application package is available **here**.
  [CBC Serbia-Montenegro]
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- **CfP: USAID Strengthening Civil Society Globally (SCS Global) Program (Deadline: 31.07.2015)**
  USAID is seeking proposals from all eligible organizations for a program to provide support to CSOs, independent media and independent labor organizations (in presence and non-presence countries) to ensure citizens' participation and inclusion and government's transparency and accountability as well as integration of these principles into other sectors as they work with civil society. USAID strongly encourages applicants to develop consortia with other responsible and eligible organizations with complementary capabilities and experiences if conducive to the achievement of results under the program objectives. The Leader Award is USD 2,500,000 and the Associate Awards amount to a total of USD 200,000,000. More information is available **here**.
  [USAID]
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- **CfP: VGIF Small Grants for Women-led Projects (Deadline: 31.07.2015)**
  Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) provides small grants up to $7,500 USD to grassroots projects that are led by women and that help empower women and girls, in developing countries around the world. VGIF grants are for one year. A limited number of grants are available for multi-year projects, but they follow a separate process, and are by invitation only. The budget amount requested from VGIF must not exceed USD 7,500. The focus areas are: Economic empowerment; Community development; Health and nutritional support; Literacy and leadership training; STEM education; and Women's human rights. Deadline for submitting letters of intent is 31st July, 2015. More information is available **here**.
  [VGIF]
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- **CfA: Think Tank Young Professional Development Program - BCSDN is Looking for an Advocacy and Policy Intern (Deadline: 13.07.2015)**

  As part of the Think Tank Young Professional Development Program, BCSDN has been selected again as a host organization to offer one young professional interested in research and policy the opportunity to work as a Policy and Advocacy Intern in these research areas: (1) Civil Society Development; (2) EU Enlargement; or (3) Donor Research. After the young professional will be internally selected, BCSDN and the applicant will apply together for getting the OSF TTF financial support needed for this position. In case of a successful application, and depending on the research topic, this individual program will last up to 6 months, starting from November 2015. Interested and eligible young professionals should send a CV and motivational letter to executiveoffice@balkancsd.net before 13th July, 2015. More information is available **here**.

  [BCSDN]

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- **CfA: TACSO Regional Conference "Community Building, CSOs' Communication" – 18-19 November, Sarajevo (Deadline: 03.08.2015)**

  TACSO is organising a Regional Conference: Community Building and CSOs' Communication that will bring together CSOs and practitioners from around the region to Sarajevo, from November 18 to 19, 2015. This Regional Conference will focus on developing and improving CSOs' community relations through communication activities. Interested applicants are requested to complete an Application Form and send it to the TACSO office in their country by 3rd August, 2015. More information is available **here**.

  [TACSO]

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- **CfA: WBG/IMF Civil Society Policy Forum Registration Open – 6-9 October, Lima (Deadline: 04.09.2015)**

  The World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Civil Society Teams hosts a bi-annual Civil Society Policy Forum (CSPF) in the margins of the World Bank Group and IMF Spring and Annual Meetings to promote substantive dialogue and an exchange of views between Bank/Fund staff, civil society representatives, government officials, academics, and other stakeholders. The CSPF, a program of events including policy sessions for CSOs, will be held from 6th to 9th October, 2015. More information is available here. Online registration is open until 4th September, 2015, for all CSOs involved in international development policy operations and/or dialogue on issues relevant to the work of the WBG and IMF. More information is available **here**.

  [World Bank]

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- **ILO Manual on Measurement of Volunteer Work and Tutorial How to Use It**

  This Manual, drafted by the Center for Civil Society Studies in cooperation with the ILO and an international Technical Experts Group, represents the first internationally sanctioned approach for gathering official data on the amount, character, and value of volunteering. This approach will generate cross-nationally comparable data, including the number of volunteers, and has the advantage of being cost-effective, reliable, and feasible in a wide variety of countries. The Manual includes details on how national statistical institutions can measure volunteering within their regular or specific data gathering exercises. A **presentation of slides** and **webinar recordings** are also available to walk any interested citizen, volunteer, CSO representative or statistician through the Manual. The Manual is available in Montenegrin language and can be downloaded **here**.

  [TSI]

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- **MAXCAP: Judicial Independence in the Western Balkans: Is the EU's 'New Approach' Changing Judicial Practices?**

  The MAXCAP Working Paper No. 11 "Judicial Independence in the Western Balkans: Is the EU's 'New Approach' Changing Judicial Practices?" by Adam Fagan and Indraneel Sircar has been published. It examines the EU's 'new approach' which represents a bold attempt to learn the lessons of previous enlargements and avoid having to initiate a Cooperation and Verification Mechanism after accession. The research, to which BCSDN has also contributed, highlights serious and persistent gaps between European standards for independence and impartiality, and the realities on the ground. Further, the study highlights that the EU needs to be careful in its pursuit of independence, professionalism and efficiency, in order to ensure that the reforms and initiatives it pursues in the Western Balkans do not lead to an accountability deficit. Moreover, there is a clear risk that a more powerful judiciary, operating with increased autonomy, will exacerbate rather than reduce the threat of political interference. The paper is available for download **here**.

  [MAXCAP]

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- **Hudson Institute's 2015 Index of Philanthropic Freedom**

  The Index of Philanthropic Freedom 2015 is the first analysis of philanthropic freedom across the world. By examining barriers and incentives for individuals and organizations to donate money and time to social causes, Hudson Institute's Center for Global Prosperity (CGP) has measured, ranked, and compared countries on their ease of giving. The new Index provides a detailed analysis of the legal barriers and incentives to philanthropy in both developed and developing countries. The research is a major step in identifying the public policy actions to encourage private giving which, in turn, can increase generosity. The report is available for download **here**.

  [Hudson Institute]

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- **Rules to Give By: A Global Philanthropy Legal Environment Index**

  Through the Global Campaign for a Culture of Philanthropy, Nexus partnered with McDermott Will & Emery and Charities Aid Foundation to produce the Rules to Give By Index - an exploration of tax and regulatory regimes around philanthropy. The data in this report presents a vast body of information about the conditions for giving in all 193 nations that are recognised by the United Nations, and provides a major reference point for any civil society effort to promote regulatory changes that facilitate philanthropy. The report is available for download **here**.

  [NEXUS]

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- **Freedom House Nations in Transit 2015**

  Democratization efforts in Europe and Eurasia face new, increasingly aggressive attacks by authoritarian states and other adversaries, according to Nations in Transit 2015, published by Freedom House. The number of countries in Eurasia receiving the report's worst classification has almost doubled in the past 10 years. Conditions in Central and Eastern Europe are still better by comparison, but worsening corruption, abuse of power, and the rise of extremist parties have left many countries vulnerable to interference from Moscow. Of the 29 countries assessed for 2014, 13 were rated as democracies, 6 as transitional regimes, and 10 as authoritarian regimes. The report is available for download **here**.

  [Freedom House]

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Wednesday, 01 July 2015

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