

Balkan Civic Practices: Promoting Civic Space 2nd CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS “Resilience through Togetherness”

BCSDN invites contributions from its members and partners in the form of op-eds, articles, case studies and creative reflections (details below) for the **Balkan Civic Practices second edition on Promoting Civic Space**, themed “*Resilience through Togetherness*” to be published in June 2019, with the support of the Balkan Trust for Democracy. In the first phase of the call, contributors should submit abstracts (of max. 150 words) until **24 May 2019**. After the abstracts are approved, full contributions should be sent until **12 June 2019**. Selected contributors will be awarded a fee of USD 250.

By sharing **stories of resilience**, this BCP edition aims to **reflect on the International Civil Society Week 2019**, co-hosted by CIVICUS, Civic Initiatives and the Balkan Civil Society Development Network in Belgrade. During 30 different sessions that took place under the theme “*The Power of Togetherness*”, more than 850 delegates from all around the world explored how people and organizations around the world can, and are, working together to enable and defend spaces for civic action in a world where global transformations are reshaping how civil society functions. This BCP will further spread the ideas, key messages and discussions raised at the ICSW centered round promoting and protecting the civic space, as well as bringing about positive social change and a sustainable civil society.

The anti-NGO law in Hungary, the Law on Freedom of Association in NGOs in Kosovo, SLAPPs in France, new “uncivil society organizations” rising in Serbia, Poland and elsewhere... All these phenomena contribute to what we call a shrinking civic space. Instead of securing the democratic checks and balances and letting citizens express their views through CSOs and spontaneous groups, many governments take the other direction - limiting the freedoms in public spheres. While regressive forces are trying to consolidate their partnerships and are identifying common “enemies”, CSOs and activists lack spaces for their work. However, by limiting the freedoms and spaces, governments face a growing resistance in Europe. Again, civil society activists and organizations are at the forefront to resist these dangerous restrictions of liberties and growing tensions within societies. Citizens keep mobilizing and fighting for the freedom of expression, the right to peacefully gather, and to join forces through associations, movements, etc.

It is with these challenges in mind that this Balkan Civic Practices edition aims to bring together professionals, academics and activists from the network, to debate what can be done to promote civic space in the WBT countries and further.

The second Balkan Civic Practices edition aims to share stories of CSOs actions in times of shrinking civic space in the Balkans and the wider Europe. Its contributions should tackle how CSOs counteract the negative trends, gauge where actions of resilience come from, and offer joint paths towards more inclusive and tolerant societies to explore in the future. The aim is to inspire and learn from each other, to reaffirm the collective voice in the joint struggles and to encourage coalition building across regions.

Through the Balkan Civic Practices, BCSDN seeks to advance the debate on civic space and mainstream issues of the enabling environment to CSOs and citizens. This edition will further spread the ideas, key messages and discussions raised at the ICSW 2019 by publishing contributions on any the following themes (according to the Bridges, Streets and Stairs tracks of ICSW 2019):

- Raising awareness about civic space and the enabling environment for civil society development
- Latest developments in civic space regionally and in the wider Europe
- Tactics and strategies to combat growing restrictions in civic space imposed in laws and in practice
- Freedom of expression towards protecting civic space: social media, hate speech, fake news, media literacy and critical participation in the public sphere
- Leveraging data, technology and online activism for impact
- Participation in global frameworks like the SDGs
- Engaging new stakeholders to protect and defend civic space
- Trans-local and intersectional movements in different contexts
- Defining and building successful civic movements that ensures citizens are at the center of driving change
- Ways for CSOs to be connected to, driven by, and accountable to citizens' concerns
- Best practices for translating civic movements into sustainable constituencies
- The role and position of media, and the stories civil society must tell to better engage citizens and stakeholders

Other related themes to promotion of civic space can also be eligible, upon consultation with the editorial team. Submissions can be sent in the following formats:

- **ESSAYS:** Analysis of a chosen topic, with preference for articles that are based on empirical research.
- **CASE STUDIES:** Critical case studies on the implementation of advocacy strategies and other experiences and which examine their impact on promoting civic space.
- **INSTITUTIONAL REFLECTIONS:** Short pieces by CSOs on their experience in management, evaluation, fundraising and sustainability or other related issues.
- **ARTISTIC PIECES:** Infographics, collections of photographs, or videos that relay a specific message (which can, if necessary, be explained by a short text).

SELECTION PROCESS AND AUTHORS' RIGHTS

In the first phase, contributors should send an abstract to the BCSDN Executive Office, which will be subject to approval based on the editorial policy. Upon approval of the abstract, contributors will be invited to submit their full contributions.

Once submitted, the contributions will be subject to a review process. Each contribution is reviewed by the BCSDN Executive Office, if it meets the required standards, by the Editorial team. The Editorial team consists of two independent reviewers outside the BCSDN EO, with relevant knowledge and expertise in the area.

Each author selected will receive a fee of USD 250 for the contribution.

In relation to authors' rights, the BCSDN Balkan Civic Practices will use Creative Commons-Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 to publish its texts. This preserves the rights of the authors, while allowing readers to share its content.

Any submission that contains citations without appropriate references (plagiarism) will be disregarded immediately.

FORMAT

Contributions should be sent to executiveoffice@balkancsd.net in electronic format (Microsoft Word file) and using the following standards:

- **Length:** Each contribution should be between 7,000 – 15,000 characters (including spaces).
- **Language:** Contributions must be submitted in English and should use clear and concise language. Translations into local languages, if submitted, will also be published, yet an English version of the contributions is mandatory.
- **Font:** "Cambria", size 12 and 1.5cm line spacing should be used for the main body of the text.
- **Footnotes:** Footnotes should only be used where necessary. Footnotes should be concise and follow the Chicago format for full note citation. "Cambria", size 10 with single line spacing. It is not necessary to include a bibliography at the end of the text

The contributions should also include a brief biography of the author (maximum 50 words) and the date when the article was written.