BALKAN CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

ANNUAL
REPORT
2011

Skopje, Macedonia
April, 2012

Contents

VISION & MISSION

Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) is a regional network of 15 local civil society organizations (CSOs) from 10 countries in the Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey).

Its vision is sustainable peace, harmony and prosperity of societies in the region.

Its mission is to empower civil society in the Balkans through sharing and developing local practices, concepts and strengthening civil society actors.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BCSDN goals and objectives are to:
1) Increase the role of civil society by strengthening its voice in policy- and decision-making on national, regional and EU level;
2) Strengthen communication, coordination and cooperation between civil society actors in the Balkan region;
3) Promote civil dialogue between civil society actors, state institutions and the European Union in order to influence public choices;
4) Develop civil society by increasing knowledge and skills of civil society actors as a base for higher quality of their work; and
5) Promote intercultural dialogue and a culture of resource-sharing as a base for efficient exchange and networking.

METHODS OF WORK

BCSDN realizes its goals mainly through advocacy and lobbying activities by:
- Developing joint positions and statements on initiatives and areas of interest common to all member organisations and by taking necessary action;
- Coordinating and cooperating with other organisations, networks and other actors on joint positions and initiatives;
- Coordinating cooperation between its members and developing joint projects and initiatives;
- Facilitating exchange of information and experience between its members and national and local state institutions and the EU;
- Coordinating and compiling researches and relevant information;
- Coordinating capacity-building and other events.

NETWORK MEMBERS & ORGANS

BCSDN consists of partner organizations, which are equal in their rights and duties as members of the network. Principle of cooperation, partnership, tolerance, dialogue and respect for others are the main working principles in the network. The network organs consist of the Council, the Board, the Executive Office and the Executive Director.

Members
1. Albanian Civil Society Foundation, Albania;
2. Center for Development of NGO's (CRNVO), Montenegro;
3. Centre for Information Services, Cooperation and Development of NGO's (CNVOS), Slovenia;
4. Center for Promotion of Civil Society (CPCS), Bosnia and Herzegovina;
5. Cenzura Plus, Croatia;
6. Civic Initiatives, Serbia;
7. Diakonia Agapes, Albania;
8. Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO), Serbia;
9. Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Albania;
10. Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF), Kosovo;
11. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Macedonia;
12. Opportunity Associates Romania (OAR), Romania;
13. Partners-Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management, Albania;
14. Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV), Turkey;
15. Vesta Association, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council is the highest governance organ of the BCSDN and is composed of one authorized representative of each organization with member status. The Council is chaired by the Chairperson of the Council, which is selected on an annual, rotating basis.

The Board is the governing and supervisory organ of the BCSDN. It is composed of 7 members: Chairperson of the Board, the Deputy-Chairperson of the Board and 5 members. Mandate of the Board members is 3 years.

Board members (2012-2014)
1. Miljenko Dereta, Serbia (Chair);
2. Erisa Cela, Albania;
3. Goran Djurovic, Montenegro;
4. Venera Hajrullahu, Kosovo;
5. Aleksandar Krzalovski, Macedonia;
6. Milan Mrdja, BiH;
7. Igor Vidacak, Croatia.

The Executive Office in Skopje, Macedonia, manages the daily functioning and coordination of the network.

The Executive Director is the major administrative and financial official and represents the BCSDN with other institutions, networks and donors. The Executive Director is appointed by the Board and participates in Council and Board sessions without the right to vote. The current Executive Director with a 3-year mandate is Tanja Hafner Ademi.

1.   PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

1.1. Goals

In 2011, BCSDN contributed to implementation of its **mid-term goals** 2009-2011:
Goal 1:   Civil society a partner in policy- and decision-making on national and EU level;
Goal 2:   Strong and active civil society actors informed and able to create cross-border and multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral partnership;
Goal 3:   Sustainable and effective CSOs able to be a motor of change and offer solution to problems of their societies;
Goal 4:   Respect for multiculturalism and shared culture of resource sharing as a base for development societies in the Balkans.

1.2. Target Group & Area

BCSDN target group are **CSOs** working on civil society development in the Balkan region. The direct beneficiaries are local civil society development and resource organizations.

With its activities, the network also targets **national institutions** and **international governmental (IGOs) organizations**. Among national institutions, focus is on national public bodies/offices for cooperation with CSOs in member countries. Among IGOs, focus is on the EU institutions, Council of Europe (CoE), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and related inter-governmental initiatives in the Balkan region.

BCSDN promotes the principle of inclusiveness of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the society (incl. Roma, inhabitants of rural areas).

BCSDN works in countries of the Balkan region, Europe and internationally according to its mission, vision and goals.

1.3. Planed Activities & Results

The planned activities envisaged continuity with network's advocacy work in 2009 and 2010:
- Under Goal 1 (*"Civil society a partner in policy- and decision-making on national and EU level"*) focus was on influencing EC and other relevant international donor agencies' exit strategies in civil society development;
- Under Goal 2 (*"Strong and active civil society actors informed and able to create cross-border and multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral partnership"*) standard basic activities were continued;
- Under Goal 3 (*"Sustainable and effective CSOs able to be a motor of change and offer solution to problems of their societies"*) the network facilitated and promoted the role and achievement of Balkan CSOs in global and EU-related civil society movements and developments;
- Under Goal 4 ("Respect for multiculturalism and shared culture of resource sharing as a base for development societies in the Balkans") no specific activities were implemented as this was addressed as horizontal issues.

In parallel, the network undertook a strategic process of defining its next Mid-term Strategy for the period 2012-2014.

2.   IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

2.1. Advocacy

Monitoring of the IPA Civil Society Facility: A Revised Commission Approach & Influence on the EC Support to Civil Society in the European Neighborhood

For the first time after starting close monitoring and advocacy on **IPA CSF financial support** in 2009, the Commission launched a mid-term evaluation of its support and a revised approach for support 2011-2012 to better serve the needs of local CSOs. BCSDN was actively involved in submitting its comments to the draft evaluation report, which were subsequently, reflected in the evaluation including direct reference to its policy paper on IPA CSF design from 2009[1] policy paper and position paper from July 2010 "A Blueprint for the Future of IPA CSF"[2] as well as its position for the revised approach for financial support under IPA CSF 2011-2012 Project Fiche. Support to regional networks, more flexible funding and improved consultation with local CSOs as some of the main concerns of BCSDN have been addressed in the new approach, while some of them, such as localizing and CSO-owned technical assistance support to CSOs via TACSO project, were not addressed (yet). Finally, the network also delivered its vision for the future IPA CSF support from 2013 onwards and the role of civil society vis-à-vis the Commission in Where does civil society in the Balkans stand and what can the Commission do to support it"[3].

In terms of monitoring **policy pressure**, in the context of the EC Progress Reports published in October, the Commission, presented so far the most common elements of the monitoring framework of the Commission (or an *Acquis*?) incl. respect for freedom of assembly and legal framework regulating it; participation of civil society to policy-making and decision-making (national and local level)– both existing legislation and institutional mechanisms and practice; allocation of state funding for civil society; and access to public information have been found in the regular analysis of the Reports published each year by the network.[4]

Based on an increased focus on regional networks, BCSDN based on the experience of network, presented two ways in which the expertise and knowledge of existing formal and informal networks can be better used by the Commission and thus, improve **consultation processes** with local CSOs in "What CSOs Networks Can Offer to the Commission"[5] as a way to support improving civil dialogue at national level.

A new cycle of EU budget for the period 2014-2020 started to be prepared in 2011, including the **new draft IPA regulation**. BCSDN participated to a stakeholders' web consultation in March 2011 and a multi-stakeholder meeting held in Zagreb in May. BCSDN was one of seldom civil society representatives present and presented a 3-point position: (1) Focus of the consultation should be on delivering RESULTS/IMPACT and not just cutting the administrative burden; (2) Sector differentiation in introduction of sectoral vs. project (fiche) approach to avoid politicization and secure implementation of reforms in key political areas; and (3) Civil society should be treated as a SECTORAL POLICY/PRIORITY and in line with that funded as such, both at Multi-beneficiary and country level.[6]

In the aftermath of s.c. Arab Spring, the Commission embarked on designing an approach to support civil society and peoples' movement both in Northern Africa and Eastern Europe, i.e. European Neighborhood. 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

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[1] The Successes and Failures of EU Pre-accession Policy in the Balkans: Support to Civil Society http://www.balkancsd.net/resources-and-links/publications/72-policy-paper-on-the-eu-civil-society-facility-now-available-in-five-languages.html

[2] http://www.balkancsd.net/images/stories/57-2_BCSDN_Blueprint_for_Future_of_the_IPA_Civil_Society_Facility.pdf

[3]   http://www.scribd.com/doc/70642185/Where-Does-Civil-Society-Stand-in-the-Balkans-and-What-Can-the-Commission-Do-to-Support-It.

[4]Enlargement Package and EC Progress Reports 2011: Civil Society - Indicator of Progress and Positive Change http://www.balkancsd.net/images/BCSDN_Analysis_of_PR_2012_Civil_Society_Indicator_for_Progress_and_Positive_Change.pdf
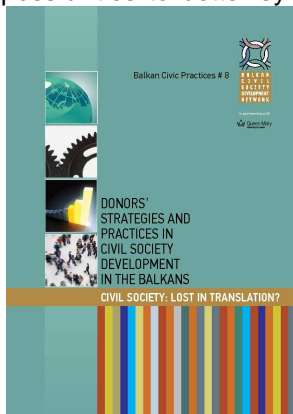
[5]   http://www.scribd.com/BCSDN/d/75846813-98-3-BCSDN-PPP-TACSO-Regional-CSOs-Networks-Conf-13th-14th-Sarajevo

[6] http://www.balkancsd.net/bcsdn-news/689-ipa-post-2013-stakeholders-consultation-held-in-zagreb.html.

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"[7]. 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 its advocacy work.

Influencing Foreign Donors Exit Strategies: Donor mapping and researching trends in foreign donor support to CSDev

At a time when foreign donors have almost withdrawn, save of EU's increased support, the network focused its research and advocacy efforts to capture current trends, methods, priorities of foreign donors still present in order to provide both donors and national Governments with possibilities to better synergize and transmit the lessons-learned from exiting to new emerging donors. In cooperation with Queen Marry, University of London, a survey and interviews with 48 representatives of major donors in 7 IPA countries were conducted during the year and which formed a basis of a **policy workshop** and a **policy paper** presented under the title "Civil Society Lost in Translation? Donor Strategies and Practices in Support of Civil Society Development in the Balkans"[8]. The workshop held on 22nd November in Brussels opened by Michael Leight, Former Director-General of the DG Enlargement featured discussion to which 50 participants from EU Institutions and Brussels bases civil society participated. The workshop launched research findings, which revealed 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 of the event were produced. On-line donor maps were also published in a database and on CD-ROMs alongside analysis and links to existing donor databases and forums and other useful resources available on one place providing a concise and comparative information from major donors.

Slovak-Balkan Public Policy Fund: A New Way to Support Development of Advocacy Capacity and Skills

In cooperation with Pontis Foundation and with the financial support of SlovakAid, BCSDN launched a pilot grant scheme. The aim is to build capacity of CSOs through offering fellowship support to selected CSO staff in developing concrete policy documents. The pilot phase running between September 2011 and October 2012 will cover 3 countries: Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro. The 1st call drew interest by 113 applications, which were reviewed by an Evaluation Board composed of Slovak and regional experts, incl. from BCSDN members. By the end of the year, the Board selected. 11 grantees for support, while the training, grant implementation and promotion is to follow in 2012. The Fund is an attempt to find a tool to help local CSO raise their capacities and skills in EU-related policy and advocacy through a concrete support.

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[7] http://www.soros.org/initiatives/brussels/articles_publications/publications/enp-csf-20111019/funder-partner-20111019.pdf

[8] http://www.balkancsd.net/resources-and-links/publications/1005-balkan-civic-practices-8-donors-strategies-and-practices-in-civil-society-development-in-the-balkans-civil-society-lost-in-translation.html

2.2. Information-sharing

BCSDN visual identity plays a significant role in the way the network presents itself to both internal and external stakeholders. BCSDN visual identity and the information sharing activities that are run by the Executive Office express the values and ambitions of the network. In 2011, the network has continued its on-going information-sharing activities: E-mail alerts (EMA), website (updated regularly and enriched in categories and content), social media and newsletter

Newsletter Back on Track

After a pause in publishing, the newsletter was again introduced as a regular bi-monthly information-sharing tool for the members. Four editions were published presenting an overview of the networks' activities and news in order to help us better communicate the work of the network. Each newsletter consists of the past activities overview, a presentation of the global and regional initiatives, a special focus on BCSDN advocacy efforts, joint initiatives and projects of BCSDN members, news from network bodies and an announcement board on upcoming events and calls.

Website better Reflecting the Work of Members

The website was divided into two parts: BCSDN News and Members News. This new section was developed with the aim to promote our members activities to a wider regional and European public that usually visits the webpage This part of the website alongside with the logos of the members added to the front page increases the visibility of the network members making it clear to the outside public that BCSDN is a network and which are its members.

E-mail Alerts Steady Growth of Subscribers

The E-mail alerts service is the most recognizable BCSDN activity. At the end of 2011, EMA had over 1200 subscribers which is 20% increase from 2010. EMA continued publishing under standard categories such as news, funding, training and education, publication, civil dialogue and introduced a new thematic on donor's strategies and practices. The news published here were often taken over from other stakeholders and members and then published on their websites in the spirit

of information sharing and increased networking. E.g. Civilnodrustvo.ba a website administrated by CPCS member of BCSDN in publishes BCSDN news in the part of the webpage dedicated to the Balkans.

Social Media – Better Connection with Larger Public

In November 2009, the network has joined two most known and used social media, i.e. Facebook and Twitter. The aim of using social media is to improve outreach and inform interested public (especially the young) about network activities. Other social media are also being utilized in order to share networks work, such as Scribd and Slideshare for our publications, YouTube channel for videos and Flicker for photos from events. In 2011, the number of followers on Facebook increased to 440 from 300 in 2010. The total reads of BCSDN publication and power point presentations published on Scribd for these 2 years since the opening of the account is 13.463. After the EU Policy Workshop in November the photos from the event were published on Flickr[9] and a video was promoted on Youtube[10].

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[9] http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=bcsdn&s=rec
[10] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPjymts0q18

2.3. Networking

BCSDN Contribution to Global and European civil society movements
The network was part of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness process by co-organizing a regional thematic consultation "CSOs Working in Situations of Conflict" for 25 CSO representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Based on this and other regional and thematic consultation, the Open Forum process resulted in establishing International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness and a joint CSO platform for Busan 4th High-Level Meeting on the Aid and Development Effectiveness. In cooperation with TRIALOG, the network also co-organized a workshop on EU Development Cooperation providing for a possibility for Macedonian CSOs to discuss civil society in the context of development cooperation and the necessity of national development platforms (NGDOs), a process to be undertaken in the context of accession of a country to the EU. Finally, BCSDN also participated to the RCC initiative to improve cooperation and coordination between its over 30 existing regional initiatives and task forces. Here also, BCSDN regularly participated and contributed to several European networks, such as CONCORD etc.

Sharing Experience and Lessons to Other Networks
The network also had the possibility to present itself as a best practice in regional CSO cooperation such as ALDA project partners in France and Macedonia. The work of members was promoted and exchanged within the framework of several projects such as Civil Dialogue on the Local Level Macedonian project, where BCSDN members and partners presented its experience in civil dialogue at national and local level.

3. ORGANISATION

Two New Members Welcomed to the Team
TUSEV from Turkey and PartnersAlbania joined the network to become its 14th and 15th member organization on the Annual Council Meeting held on 11th June in Belgrade. TUSEV is the first member organization from Turkey, while PartnersAlbania are the 4th member from Albania.

New Mandate and Enlarging the Board to Make it Effective and Representative of its Membership
After concluding its first 2 year mandate after formalization, the network members reflected on the need to extend the mandate of network organs (Board, Executive Office, Executive Director) from 2 or 3 years and the composition of the Board was enlarged to 6 to 8 members to account for the flexibility needed for the enlargement in this and in the coming years..

On the Road to a New Network Strategy 2012-2014
In programmatic terms, the network embarked on a strategic planning process to develop the new mid-term strategy for the period 2012-2014. The initial discussion from AMC on the way forward were discussed by the Board at a 1-day strategic meeting held in Prishtina on 4th October, which resulted in proposal for a revised mission, mid-term goals and priorities. Mid-term Strategy is to be approved at the ACM 2012.

New Model for the Management of the Network
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.

4. EXTERNAL COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

BCSDN cooperates with other networks, organizations and stakeholders in order to develop partnership with interested organizations and advances its goals. The network is active in advancing networking both at global, European and regional level. The network has become recognized as a best practice in partnership and cooperation.

Partner networks/organizations on **global** and **European level** are:
- CIVICUS;
- Open Forum for CSOs Development Effectiveness;
- Aprodev Working Group on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA);
- CONCORD-TRIALOG Working Group Enlargement, Pre-Accession and Neighborhood (EPAN);
- Council of Europe;
- European Citizens' Action Service (ECAS);
- European Network of National Associations (ENNA);
- Central Eastern Europe Citizen's Network;
- Balkan Corporate Social Responsibility Network;
- Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA);
- OneWorldSEE, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The network activities have undergone 2 external evaluations (in 2003 and 2007) as part of the 3-year programme cycle. There was no evaluation planned for 2011. Regular monitoring of project activities is to be secured through existing governing and management procedures. External financial audit was introduced.

6. FINANCIAL PLAN *(Status up-date 26th March, 2012)*

	Budgetlines	Financial report (to be adopted 27th April 2012)	Budget (endorsed 11th June, 2011)	Financial report (adopted 11th June 2011)
		2011	2011	2010
1	OFFICES	1,625	2,100	1,435
2	TRAVEL & MEETINGS (incl. netw organs)	6,862	8,422	7,916
3	COMMUNICATIONS	1,039	900	763
4	STAFF SALARIES	11,636	12,500	7,738
5	INFORMATION SERVICES (web, alerts etc.)	4,914	7,580	7,928
6	FINANCIAL SERVICES (incl. audit)	4,464	2,950	3,037
7	DIRECT COSTS	21,784	29,081	17,575
8	OVERHEAD		5,732	0
	TOTAL EXPANDITURE	**52,325**	**69,425**	**46,392**
8	MEMBERSHIP fee	3,113	3,500	3,001
9	APRODEV			4,546
10	BTD	34,987	35,000	17,832
11	DFID			22,889
12	OTHER (individual members)		17,144	352
13	SlovakAid	6,174		-
14	MCIC/Project GDLN	6,306	13,781	-
15	MCIC/Project Open Forum	3,759		
16	OWN INCOME (refund, interest rates, deposits)	3,066		3,939
	TOTAL INCOME	**57,405**	**69,425**	**52,560**
	BALANCE (incl. carryover)	**6,103**	**0**	**6,167**