



## E-Mail Alerts no. 317

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- **The Assembly and Association Briefing, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Issue 12)**

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- **Rethinking Civil Society and Support for Democracy**

Sweden has a long tradition of providing development cooperation with the aim of strengthening democracy and respect for human rights. Sida-support for these purposes has increased in recent years, and accounts for more than 5 billion SEK (approx. 530mil EUR) annually. At the same time, there have been a number of changes that affect the conditions for this kind of support. New kinds of civic actors and protest have appeared, and new regime tactics have affected the possibilities for civil society to organise and to act. In the report Rethinking Civil Society and Support for Democracy, the author Richard Youngs analyses the new challenges and opportunities for civil society support and the implications for donors like Sweden. The report contains a number of recommendations for how donors like Sweden should respond and design their support. The report is available [here](#).

[Expert Group for Aid Studies]




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- **Amendments to the Law on CSOs in Montenegro**

The coalition of CSOs from Montenegro “Saradnjom do cilja” submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs its opinions on the upcoming amendments to the Law on CSOs and the adoption of the regulation that will establish the new system of financing CSOs from public funds. The Coalition stresses that the amendments to the Law on CSOs in the area of financing should be in line with the recommendations from the Strategy for the Development of CSOs 2014-2016 and the Analysis of the institutional framework for the provision of activities related to the development of CSOs. Their comments, among other, refer to the composition of the body which is responsible for evaluating project proposals and to the ways of evaluating the success of the projects that have been implemented through public funding support. The proposed principles to be used in drafting the Law and by-law that defines the issue of financing CSO projects and programmes from public funds can be downloaded at this [link](#). More information is available [here](#).

[CRNVO]



- **Draft Law on Transparency Discriminating CSOs in BiH**

According to a statement by Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina, the draft Law on the transparency of non-profit organizations is discriminatory against organizations funded by foreign donors and it shows that the intention of the authorities of Republic of Srpska is to restrict the work of organizations that criticize the government. The controversial draft only deals with organizations whose activities and projects are funded by the government and it completely does not deal with organizations that are funded from local sources

and budgets from different levels of government, as they do not even have to report and justify the budget funds they have been allocated. The Draft Law also does not define political activity clearly, thus leaving open a dangerous possibility that the relevant institutions, through broad and inappropriate interpretation of the law, ban the work of organizations whose actions do not support the authorities. TI BiH does not dispute the need for transparency in the work of NGOs, but considers that in this case the authorities, under the guise of transparency, actually want to control and limit the work of only those organizations that are not under their oversight. More information is available [here](#).

[Transparency International - BiH]



- **Initiative for Reviewing the Constitutionality of the Law on Public Peace and Order in Republic of Srpska**

Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina and Journalists' Club Banja Luka - BiH Journalists Association submitted to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Srpska a joint initiative to launch a procedure to review the constitutionality and legality of the Law on Public Peace and Order. The initiative proposes that the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia should reach a decision to initiate the procedure to review the constitutionality of the disputed provisions of Articles 7, 8 and 22 of the Law on Public Order and a decision that the disputed articles are not in conformity with the Constitution, considering that they represent a direct violation of the right to freedom of thought and belief, opinion, and public expression of opinion and peaceful assembly and association. More information is available [here](#).

[Transparency International - BiH]



- **Turkish Court Rules Peaceful Demonstrators Do Not Need Permission**

An Istanbul court that acquitted 26 people detained during the Gezi Park protests in the summer of 2013 has stated in its reasoned ruling that people do not have to get official permission for peaceful demonstrations, and demonstrations held without permission are not necessarily violent. Judge Onur Öz Saraç referred to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in the court's 17-page reasoning, saying that "all states member of the convention pledges to comply with it, so that the convention becomes part of the domestic law." The justification also recalled ECHR decisions on Turkey in which it found Turkey guilty over the excessive use of force by the police and said the police must refrain from using violence against demonstrators. More information is available [here](#).

[CIVICUS]



- **Opinion: Countries around the World Are Revoking Freedom of Assembly**

On March 26, the Spanish government ended freedom of assembly when the Citizens' Security Law was passed, allowing the police discretionary ability to hand out fines up to \$650,000 to "unauthorized" demonstrators who protest near a transport hub or nuclear power plant. They will be allowed to issue fines of up to \$30,000 for taking pictures of police during protest, failing to show police ID, or just gathering in an unauthorized way near government buildings. Spain is only the latest "democracy" to consign freedom of assembly to the dustbin. France banned Palestine solidarity demonstrations; police in Australia gained the power to ban protesters from appearing in public spaces for a year, even if they work or live there; and Egypt, Ukraine and Russia's governments have outlawed protest entirely. All of this happened in 2014. While earlier eras of protest and riot sometimes wrested concessions from the state, today the government's default response is to implement increasingly draconian laws against the public exercise of democracy. It raises the question: How many rights must be abrogated before a liberal democracy becomes a police state? Read more [here](#).

[CIVICUS]



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- **Central Portal for E-consultation with Interested Public Introduced in Croatia**

A central portal called "e-Savjetovanja" (e-Consulting) for online consultation with the interested public in enacting legislation was presented on 27th April, in the Conference Hall of the Croatian Government. The portal is a new step in the development of the process of consultation with the interested public regarding adoption of laws, other regulations and by-laws, that will allow easy access to all open consultations in one place, easier commenting on the provisions of the draft regulations, and generally will contribute to an improved cooperation with citizens and all interested social groups in the process of shaping public policy. The portal is available at <http://savjetovanja.gov.hr>. More information on the presentation is available [here](#).

[Office for Cooperation with NGOs - Croatia]



- **Draft Strategy for Development of Social Entrepreneurship Adopted in Croatia**

A Draft Strategy for the development of social entrepreneurship for the period 2015 - 2020 was adopted by the Croatian Government on 30th April. The draft Strategy defines terms and definitions in the field of social entrepreneurship, objectives, measures and activities of social entrepreneurship, and the methodology for the development and monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy for development of social entrepreneurship in Croatia. The goal of the National Strategy is to create an enabling environment for the development of social entrepreneurship in the Republic, create legal and fiscal frameworks, enable financial and technical support to social entrepreneurs, define the criteria and instruments for identifying, monitoring and development of social undertakings, and provide education at all levels for recognizing the importance of social entrepreneurship as an essential component of economic development. More information is available [here](#).

[Program JAKO]



- **ICNL Global Forum: Turning the Tide against Shrinking Space for Civil Society**

ICNL's Global Forum 2015 opened on the 10th June in Stockholm, with welcome videos from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the President of the USA, Barack Obama, both stressing the power of civil society and global citizenship to overcome pressing global challenges, especially as fundamental freedoms like freedom of association and freedom of speech are under attack in many countries. Over the three days the forum served as a possibility for brainstorming ways to overcome restrictions to civic space, but also celebrating success stories. On responding to the restrictions against civil society, the panellists covered topics concerning the role of governments, private sector and CSOs to collaborate and work effectively in minimizing the negative impact on citizens and their safety. In addition, civil society indexes, such as the Monitoring Matrix and VDem, were also discussed. The forum brought together over 200 of the world's leading experts in civil society, government, multilateral institutions, and the donor community, all of whom are there to help civil society stand taller. More information is available [here](#).

[ICNL]



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- **CfP: BPPF Call Extended for CSOs in Montenegro (Deadline: 19.05.2015)**

BCSDN and its members announced the third Balkan Public Policy Fund (BPPF) Call for Proposals for CSOs to develop policy or advocacy proposals. The Call is re-opened for CSOs in Montenegro with an extended deadline until 19th May, 2015. The objective of the Call is to contribute to the capacity building of CSOs in monitoring and advocating on civil society-related policies covered by the Monitoring Matrix areas or the Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Countries, 2014-2020. More specifically, for Montenegro the selected

topics are: 1) Sub-area 2.2 Towards general reform of the public financing system for CSOs in Montenegro, and 2) Sub-area 2.3 Establishing records about work and operations of CSOs in Montenegro. The maximum grant amount allocated will be EUR 3,000 (100%, no co-financing) and 2 grants will be awarded per country. More information is available [here](#).

[BCSDN]



- **CfP: OSI Grants for Joint CSOs Actions – Macedonia (Deadline 29.05.2015)**

Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia (FOSIM) announced a Call for grants for joint actions of civil society organizations within the USAID Civil Society Project. The project provides support to civil society in promoting democratic reforms. The purpose of this Call is to provide support to jointly developed actions of CSOs, partnerships or coalitions that encourage civil society actors of solidarity and joining together around a specific issue, through at least 7 grants of up to USD 32,000, without mandatory co-financing. The duration of the projects should be between 10 and 12 months. All grantees will additionally be provided with training and consultations based on their specific needs. Deadline for submission of applications is 29th May, 2015. The full application package is available at this [link](#).

[Open Society Foundation]



- **CfP: National Competition for Green Ideas in Montenegro (Deadline: 31.05.2015)**

In partnership with the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, fAKT organizes a national competition for "green ideas", intended to encourage individuals, farms, small businesses and CSOs from Montenegro to develop innovative business ideas that are based on the principles of sustainable development. The goal is to recognize and support the ideas with the greatest potential for sustainability, i.e. achieving socio-economic development impact on local communities, while preserving natural resources and the environment. The three top rated innovative ideas will get a chance to participate in the Regional Forum of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund at the end of July, and will compete for a prize of USD 10,000. In case none of these three ideas gets the prize, the highest ranked one will get a financial support of EUR 4,000. The deadline for submitting "green ideas" is 31st May, 2015. More information is available [here](#).

[fAKT]



- **CfP: Civil Society Facility Programme 2014 – Macedonia (Deadline: 25.06.2015)**

The EU Delegation in Macedonia is seeking project proposals for strengthening the impact of CSOs in public and acquis-related policies and decision making, including strengthening the civil and political dialogue and thus influencing key sector reforms for further support to the EU integration processes. Priorities of the Call are: 1) Support to civil society and participatory democracy, 2) Freedom of expression and media integrity, and 3) Promoting improved inter-community relations. The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 5,000,000. Any grant requested under each of the thematic priorities must fall between EUR 150,000 and 300,000, and between minimum 60% and maximum 90% of the total eligible costs of the action. The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 12 month nor exceed 36 months. The deadline for submission of concept notes is 25th June, 2015. The full application package is available at this [link](#).

[EuropeAid]



- **CfA: Workshop on the Strategy for Gov-CSO Cooperation in Macedonia – 22 May, Skopje (Deadline: 19.05.2015)**

Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) invites the interested public to participate in a workshop on the implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation between the Government and civil society, which will be held on 22nd May, 2015, at 11:00h in the Club of Journalists in Skopje. MCIC prepared a **document** for public policies that review the degree of implementation of the measures provided with the Strategy in the time-period between June 2012 and December 2014. The workshop will serve to discuss and determine the challenges in the implementation of planned activities in the next period. The workshop is part of the regional project “Balkan Civil Society Acquis – Strengthening the Advocacy and Monitoring Potential and Capacities of CSOs” led by BCSDN. Participation needs to be confirmed until 19th May to [sog@mcms.org.mk](mailto:sog@mcms.org.mk).

[MCIC]



- **CfA: Serbian Visions Multi-Congress – 16-17 May, Belgrade**

The first multi-congress in Serbia titled “Serbian Visions” is a specific concept of bringing together CSOs and industry at one place. The main objective is to strengthen the role of civil society in the country and create a healthier business environment by highlighting special importance to the development of the country segments such as, among others, European integration, human rights, economy, education, environmental protection, innovation, as well as other segments that make up a vision for a better future for Serbia. In addition, it aims to encourage cooperation between CSOs and companies in order to advance philanthropy in Serbia. Within the event’s program, Trag fondacija is organizing a panel discussion on the development of philanthropy in Serbia (on 16th May at 18h). The congress will be held on 16th and 17th May at the Hotel Radisson Blu Old Mill Belgrade, and it’s free entrance. More information is available [here](#).

[TRAG Fondacija]



- **CfA: 5th Western Balkans Civil Society Forum – 2-3 June, Belgrade**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) will be hosting the fifth Western Balkans Civil Society Forum in Belgrade on 2 and 3 June 2015. The EU-Western Balkans Forum is a biannual event organised in a country of the region and provides a unique opportunity to bring together a broad range of civil society representatives from the two regions. This fifth Forum will contribute to strengthening relations between Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and the EU, thanks to the participation of representatives of CSOs from the region and from the EU institutions. Among the items on the agenda for this event is the issue of how to increase transparency and openness to CSOs in the Western Balkans during the accession process. Participants will also discuss the role of civil society in addressing employment and specifically youth employment in the Western Balkans. The Forum will also cover the issues of fight against corruption and minority rights. The draft programme for this event is available [here](#). For more information, contact [Balkans@eesc.europa.eu](mailto:Balkans@eesc.europa.eu).

[EESC]



- **CfA: RRPP National Conference on “Fostering Evidence-Informed Policy-making Practices in Albania” – 12 June, Tirana**

The conference, taking place on the 12th June in Tirana, is designed as an overarching event integrating findings and recommendations from three forums, discussing shared challenges and opportunities, and identifying follow-up alternatives and strategies for a sustainable national dialogue. It brings together strategic policymakers, policy-oriented scientists, experts and data ‘providers’ to discuss the current state of evidence-informed policy-making in Albania, the capacity of policymakers to use research and of researchers to produce quality outputs, as well as the incentives which make policymakers use research. Two panel sessions will take place: 1) Strengthening the ties between social scientists and policymakers for improved practices of evidence-informed policy-making processes and 2) Enhancing capacities and incentives for evidence-based policy-making in

Albania: learning from best practices. More information is available [here](#).

[PASOS]



- **Civil Society Voices: How the EU Should Engage Its Eastern Neighbours**

The EU's "eastern neighbourhood" is an increasingly complicated and contested space. The challenges of Russia's resurgence and regional elites' resistance to reform are forcing the EU to reevaluate its policies. With the launch of its Eastern Partnership six years ago, the EU was ready to offer its neighbours to the east—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine—integration into the EU market, mobility of people, and close political ties in exchange for rule of law and democratic and economic reforms. Today, it questions whether this policy has secured its strategic interests and political influence. This policy paper highlights local concerns and expectations about the EU's role in the region and its support for stability and democracy. As the EU rethinks its policies in the area, this paper offers recommendations on how to make the Eastern Partnership more effective and relevant to people, societies, and government, and to secure the EU's interests in an increasingly polarized and unstable region. The paper is available for download [here](#).

[Open Society Foundations]



- **Varieties of Democracy: Global Standards, Local Knowledge**

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy. It is a collaboration among more than 50 scholars worldwide which is co-hosted by the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden; and the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame, USA. With more than 2,500 Country Experts, the V-Dem project is one of the largest social science data collection projects focusing on research. In order to better conceptualize and measure democracy, the V-Dem project distinguishes among 7 high-level Principles of Democracy: Electoral, Liberal, Participatory, Majoritarian, Consensual, Deliberative, and Egalitarian. It disaggregates into dozens of lower-level Components of Democracy such as regular elections, judicial independence, direct democracy, and gender equality, and provides disaggregated indicators for each conception and each component. V-Dem covers all countries (and some dependent territories) from 1900 to the present, whenever possible, and provides an estimate of measurement reliability for each rating. All ratings are public, free of charge, made in a user-friendly interface. V-Dem is available at the following [link](#).

[V-Dem]



- **The Assembly and Association Briefing, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Issue 12)**

The Issue No. 12 of the Assembly and Association Briefing, the newsletter of Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, has been published. This issue covers the following topics: Experts in Chile to shape UN recommendations on managing peaceful assemblies; Vibrant civil society fundamental to Latin America's successes thus far – and equally important going forward; UN experts: continued detention of Ethiopian journalists unacceptable; Pre-election violence endangers Burundi's young democracy; Contribute to the UNSR's next report on "sectoral equity"; Freedom of association and assembly: By the numbers; Special rapporteur news in brief: March-April 2015; World briefing: Freedom of assembly and association in the news. The newsletter is available for download [here](#).

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