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BALKAN CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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- **6 Ways Donors Can Help Build Effective Civil Society**
  Civil society is a powerful thing. It can change discriminatory laws, transform societies and hold governments to account. But how can donors contibute to building effective civil society? This was the big question of a twitter chat Bond co-hosted with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) as part of DFID's review of its partnership with civil society. 700 tweets from over 170 participants in 11 countries tried to answer the question. **Here** are six ways that stuck out.
  [Bond UK]
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- **A Four-Point Commitment Made by Western Balkans Governments on the Occasion of the Western Balkans OGP Dialogue 2015**
  The Open Government Partnership, launched in 2011 to foster more open and accountable government, more responsive to citizens, is an increasingly important initiative for the countries of the Western Balkans, going hand in hand with the reforms embarked upon in the EU accession process. The governments of the Western Balkans have come together on the occasion of the **Western Balkans OGP Dialogue 2015**, hosted by IDM and the Minister of Innovation and Public Administration, in Tirana, Albania, on 10-11 September 2015, when they made the four commitments 1) to join with civil society in a concerted public awareness campaign to explain to citizens the OGP initiative objectives, 2) to co-operate in sharing standards in open data, and in promoting innovative practices across all countries, 3) to establish a permanent Western Balkans OGP Dialogue Forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP Action Plan implementation, and 4) to innovatively increase citizens' engagement in the success of the OGP initiative. More information is available **here**.
  [Balkan OGP Dialogue]
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- **Civil Society in Montenegro Asks for 7 Million Euros from the State Budget**
  The Council for the Development of NGOs in Montenegro, with the votes from state institutions' representatives has endorsed the draft law on NGOs, while all the representatives of civil sector were against this act, demanding its withdrawal and refinement. Representatives of CSOs criticize the fact that the law does not define the amount of funds that CSOs would receive for the realization of their projects, and that there is still no law which would regulate financing CSOs from games of chance proceeds as envisaged in basic law. CSOs are requesting one percent of the current annual budget of Montenegro, which, according to them, amounts to around seven million Euros. Even though the draft law has introduced systematic changes, CSOs are not satisfied with the proposed model since, as they claim, basically nothing has changed and has been clarified in relation to the current bad practice in terms of financing of CSOs from the state budget. More information is available **here**.
  [CRNVO]
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- **A Binding International Instrument on Business & Human Rights Should Safeguard Civic Space**

  In a commentary for the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, Maina Kiai, UN Sepcial Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association elaborates why it is so difficult to ensure that assembly and association rights are respected in the context of natural resource exploitation, and concludes that the best solution to the problem would be a binding international treaty that imposes human rights obligations on businesses. As Kiai puts it, the open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights tasked with leading the process towards a binding instrument has a long, arduous, but very important assignment. An instrument like this needs to affirm civil society's interests as of equal importance as those of States and corporations, and to empower them by providing a means of effectively asserting their claims. More information is available **here**.
  [Global Policy Forum]

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- **BCSDN Lends its Expertise in Development of Strategy for the Black Sea Region Civil Society**

  On 9th September, 2015, Tanja Hafner Ademi and Milka Ivanova Hadjievska of BCSDN presented the report on the **Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in the Black Sea Region** which was commissioned by the Black Sea NGO Forum to support its development of a join civil society strategy for action in the region. The report was discussed with EU stakeholders including EC, EEAS, EP, Romanian representations, civil society networks, as a basis for the preparation of the annual gathering - the 8th Edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum. The BCSDN team based its work on its Monitoring Matrix developed in cooperation with ECNL and the CPDE framework and analyses the basic freedoms, tax, state support, volunteering policies, cooperation with public institutions, donor and CSO relationships in 8 countries of the Black Sea Region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine). The full report is to be published and made available in October.
  [BCSDN]

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- **Key Achievements of the Croatian Office for Cooperation with NGOs for 2013-2014**

  A recently published report by the Office outlines the key results of its work over the last two years in the following areas: improving the policy and legislative framework for the development of civil society; involving citizens, civil society and other stakeholders in shaping public policy; effective financing of projects and programs of organizations of interest to the common good; implementation of EU projects; international cooperation and information and education. During 2013 and 2014, the staff of the Office responded to over 900 inquiries of citizens, held 83 workshops in the areas of consulting, financing and EU funds, and participated in 19 working groups for drafting laws and strategic documents. The office has issued five publications, and its website was visited more than 500,000 times. In the reported period, the Office was in charge of monitoring 63 IPA projects (IPA 2008-2011) with a total value of EUR 12.3 million, while within the IPA 2012 the launched calls were EUR 5.5 million worth. The full report is available **here**.
  [Office for Cooperation with NGOs - Croatia]

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- **"Stop the Erosion of Democracy" – UN Rights Experts Urge Governments across the World**

  Speaking ahead of the International Day of Democracy on 15th September, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, deplore the increasing erosion of democracy as a result of repressive policies in some countries, but also by virtue of the increasing influence of vested interests at the expense of the public will. This year's theme for the International Day of Democracy is space for civil society. The United Nations and all Special Procedures mandate holders endorse this necessary and achievable goal. On International Day of Democracy 2015, they call on States to recognize that civil

society space is the vehicle that allows people, among other, to speak out, engage and influence the leaders they have elected, and to peacefully assemble when other ways of expressing their grievances fail. Democracy today has become an over-used word, and a country does not become democratic simply by holding elections. It is indeed civil society space that is essential for a true democracy. Read more **here**.
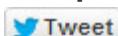[UN Special Rapporteur]

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- ### Google's Non-Profit Program Now Available in Croatia and Bulgaria
  With a diverse company, among South Africa, Kenya and Botswana, Google's program for non-profit organizations arrived in Croatia and Bulgaria. This is good news for all civil society organizations as they can now have free access to a range of tools that this technology giant offers. As explained, non-profit organizations from Croatia will now have access to various tools and support such as free advertising through AdWords for promoting organizational websites, free use of Google applications for business customers, which include Gmail, Docs, Calendar and other services, and a premium possibility for branding their YouTube channels, including increased capacities for video upload. With these tools organizations can increase awareness of its activities, be it fundraising or other actions. More information is available **here**.
  [Program JAKO]

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- ### CfP: EIDHR Global Call 2015 (Deadline 01.10.2015)
  The global objective of the call is to contribute, through supporting CSOs, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to contribute to the strengthening of the international framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, justice and the Rule of Law. The call pursues five objectives enshrined in five different LOTs: 1) To Support Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) organisations working at grassroots level; 2) To contribute to the monitoring and the effective implementation of the specific international core conventions ratified by GSP; 3) To support the fight against the death penalty; 4) To support migrants, including asylum seekers in third countries, internally displaced persons and stateless persons; and 5) To Support children associated with armed forces, groups and gangs and impacted by armed violence. The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for proposals is EUR 26,866,185 and the indicative allocations of funds, as well as minimum/maximum funds to be granted vary between the 5 LOTs. The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 24 months nor exceed 36 months. More information is available **here**.
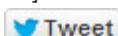 [EuropeAid]

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- ### CfP: Social Policy Innovations Supporting Reforms in Social Services (Deadline: 16.11.2015)
  The purpose of this call for proposals is to foster policy innovation in the organisation and delivery of social services aiming at the integration of service users in the labour market. Policy innovation should focus on the integrated delivery of social services such as: social protection, employment, child protection, long-term care, social welfare etc. The overall indicative amount made available for this call is EUR 10,800,000. The grant requested must be EUR 750,000 minimum and EUR 2,000,000 maximum, and must not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The duration of the action must be between 24-36 months. More information is available **here**.
  [EuropeAid]

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- ### CfP: Canada Fund for Local Initiatives 2015-2016, Kosovo (Deadline: 18.09.2015)
  The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) provides direct funding assistance to community groups, non-government organizations, people's organizations and in exceptional cases, international NGOs, and government institutions for small projects addressing governance, democracy, capacity-building, economic, and other social development issues. The call for proposals seeks projects that are of a maximum duration of 4

months (with activities completed by February 26, 2016). Requests for core funding will not be considered. The average contribution is expected to be in the range of CAD 10,000-25,000 for each individual project. More information is available **here**.
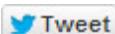[KCSF]

- ### Indicative Annual Plan for ESF Calls 2015 for Croatia Published
  The Ministry of Labour and Pension System announced the indicative annual plan for grants from the European Social Fund (ESF) for 2015. As a Managing Authority for the Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020, the Ministry has prepared a plan in order to inform the public and to allow for timely preparation of proposals of potential applicants. In the period from September to December, 2015, the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Croatian Government plans to publish three call for proposals (CfP), under the priority area 'Good Governance'. The plan contains an indicative list of CfPs and deadlines known at the time of its preparation and is subject to changes and amendments according to the dynamics of the involved institutions' working processes. The indicative annual plan can be found **here**.
  [Office for Cooperation with NGOs - Croatia]

- ### CfA: Call for Policy Brief Outlines – Regional OSF Alumni Conference 2015 (Deadline: 20.09.2015)
  The Belgrade Open School and the Open Society Foundations (OSF) Scholarship Programs invite outline submissions for policy brief papers at the Regional Alumni Conference to be held in Belgrade, Serbia, November 19-20, 2015. This conference aims to contribute to regional Western Balkan cooperation and to improve the OSF Scholarship Programs alumni role in policy dialogue on regional social, political and educational issues. Regional meeting of the OSF alumni aims to keep debate of the open society values on board in Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo through providing environment for cooperation between different generations of scholars in the region. Deadline for submission of the outline of the policy brief is 20th September, 2015. More information is available **here**.
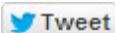 [BOS]

- ### CfA: Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Programme at the National Endowment for Democracy (Deadline: 15.10.2015)
  The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is seeking applicants for its Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Programme which is a fully funded, international exchange program that offers practitioners, scholars, and journalists from around the world the opportunity to spend five months in residence at NED, in Washington, D.C., in order to undertake independent research on democracy in a particular country or region. The purpose of this program is to deepen the understanding of democracy and enhance their ability to promote democratic change. The program provides a rich intellectual setting for educational exchange and professional development. While in residence, fellows reflect on their experiences; engage with counterparts; conduct research and writing; consider best practices and lessons learned; and develop professional relationships within a global network of democracy advocates. More information is available **here**.
  [FundsForNGOs]

- ### Civil Society Participation in UN Review is Key to Addressing Human Rights Concerns
  In a new report entitled "Enhancing the effectiveness of the UN Universal Periodic Review: A civil society perspective" CIVICUS examines the experiences of civil society groups from across the world in engaging with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The report, based on interviews with civil society leaders operating in diverse regions of the globe, provides a number of substantive recommendations to strengthen the UPR

process to support the creation of a safe and enabling environment for civil society to promote and protect human rights. This paper, in collating the views of civil society experts, underscores the integral value of public participation with this important process to protect and promote universal human rights. More information is available **here**.
[CIVICUS]

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- ## A Beginner's Guide to EU Funding 2014-2020
  The European Commission presented a guide for the new EU budget, or multiannual financial framework, which runs from 2014 to 2020, with particular emphasis on the possibilities for financing different projects and programs. The Guide will be particularly useful and convenient for small and medium-sized businesses, civil society, youth, researchers, farmers, public administration bodies and other users. It contains basic information on tenders for the period 2014-2020, such as how and where to apply, eligibility criteria etc., examples and practical tips for applying, as well as direct links to the websites where the detailed calls will be published. The Guide is available for download **here**.
  [European Commission]

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- ## Transparency of the Budget Processes on Municipal-Level in Macedonia
  The Center for Economic Analysis (CEA), has been monitoring the budget transparency of local self-government units in Macedonia, defined as timely and complete access to important documents on the budget process for citizens and other stakeholders. In addition to monitoring eight important budget documents for one year, CEA also monitored the perceptions for the degree of transparency and participation in the budget process in all municipalities in Macedonia, regarding multiple stakeholders (citizens, civil society, municipalities' councils, employees of municipalities, etc.). The main findings from the monitoring of transparency of the budget process in different municipalities in Macedonia indicate that there is significant space for improving the transparency but also that there are significant barriers that weaken the relationship and communication between local government and citizens. According to the Open Budget Index for 2015 on budget transparency, Macedonia is ranked among the world's worst - denying its citizens information on and a voice in how public money is used. CEA's report is available for download **here**.
  [CEA]

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