



## E-Mail Alerts no. 329

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- **Don't Get Excited, China Is Not the New Aid Superpower**

The international development community keeps rediscovering – and misunderstanding – China. The latest episode came in September, when Chinese president Xi Jinping gave a speech at the UN after the launch of the new sustainable development goals (SDGs), pledging his support to the SDGs. Specifically, China would set up a USD 2bn fund to support south-south cooperation. China would also try to increase its investment in the least developed countries to USD 12bn by 2030. Finally, his government would cancel some of the developing country debt owed to China. The flush of media attention around these pledges suggested that they were something new and unprecedented. By giving assistance on this scale and forgiving debt, a BBC reporter wrote, China was (at last) willing to take on “more of the responsibilities that go with its status as an emerging superpower”. Others simply got it wrong. Seeing Xi Jinping’s pledges in historical context helps us to see what is actually new, and what this means for our understanding of China’s rise. More information is [here](#).

[The Guardian]



- **Enhancing Enabling Environment in the Black Sea Region: BCSDN Team Presents a First Ever Regional Mapping Report**

On 2nd November, BCSDN team composed of Tanja Hafner Ademi and Milka Ivanovska Hadjievska presented the report Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in the Black Sea Region: Towards a Regional Strategy for Cooperation at the 8th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum held in Tbilisi, Georgia. This report has been commissioned by the Black Sea NGO Forum with the aim to assess the state of the enabling environment for civil society development in eight countries of the Black Sea region: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. More information is available [here](#). The analytical framework was based on combination of its experience in monitoring the EE for CSDev in EU Enlargement countries with the Monitoring Matrix Tool-kit and the CPDE Framework for Assessing Enabling Environment Progress resulting in analysis of 10 core dimensions of EE for CSDev. For the BCSDN team, this has been an opportunity to test the Monitoring Matrix tool in other regions outside the Balkans and help civil society discuss and strategies about common actions to address identified challenges. The report is available [here](#).

[BCSDN]



- **Analysis of the Capacity of Local and Regional Self-Governments in Croatia**

CenzuraPlus seeks to analyse the capacity of local and regional governments regarding their use of EU funds, and the cooperation and involvement of civil society in decision-making processes at the local level, in order to formulate recommendations for making their use more effective. For this purpose, CenzuraPlus developed a

complex questionnaire to gather information from a variety of sectors, which would provide great benefits for the local and regional self-governments. Based on the civil society's responses to the questionnaire, more realistic recommendations will be developed for further action in the context of a more efficient use of EU funds, cooperation with civil society and involvement of citizens in the decision-making processes. More information is available [here](#).

[CenzuraPlus]



- **Croatia: Call for Participation in the Preparation of the National Foundation's Strategy 2016-2020**

The National Foundation for Civil Society Development invites the interested public (representatives of CSOs, the public and the private sector, businesses) to engage in the online consultation about further developing the strategic objectives of the National Foundation's work, based on its previous years' experience. The online consultation is open until 25th November, 2015, aiming for the public to consider the current implementation of the Strategic Plan of the National Foundation for the period 2012 to 2016, and propose improvements of existing and/or new strategic goals for the next four years period, from 2016 to 2020. For the purpose of a thorough analysis of the implementation of the Foundation's strategic objectives in the past period, and better preparation for the new Action Strategy, the Foundation has prepared a questionnaire that will contribute to further improvement of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development. More information is available [here](#).

[National Foundation for CSDev, Croatia]



- **UNSR's Third Party Intervention Urges European Court to Establish "Clear and Strong Protective Standards" on Freedom of Assembly**

UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai has joined with Ghent University's Human Rights Centre to file a third party intervention in four cases before the European Court of Human Rights, which concern the exercise of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in Azerbaijan. At issue is the Court's interpretation of Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which enshrines the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. According to the submission, states are increasingly limiting the right to freedom of assembly using justifications such as 'unauthorized assemblies' or 'unlawful assemblies' with consequent measures such as administrative and criminal sanctions. According to them, the cases provide an excellent opportunity for the Court to clarify the use of these notions and measures in light of the legal protection guaranteed by Article 11 of the Convention. More information is available [here](#).

[Freeassembly.net]



- **Consultations on International Accounting Standards for Non-Profit Organizations**

On 5th October, 2015 a seminar about the development of international guidance on a coherent set of financial reporting standards was held by CIPFA. Built upon a research conducted in 2014, the seminar addressed the issue of CSO financial management standards, highlighting that the lack of coherence in international standards for not-for-profit accounting contributes to the complexity of current donor requirements, which are costly to administer and yet fail to give the donors and other stakeholders the assurance they need. This seminar comes at a key moment as the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), which deals with the corporate for-profit world, is consulting on whether it should extend its remit to develop standards for the not-for-profit sector. The consultation closes on 30 November 2015. All interested shall take part and submit a letter of comment to IFRS either via their [website](#) or [email](#). More information is available [here](#).

[MANGO]



- **Democratic Standards Unfolding, Basic Rights Under Threat - BCSDN Analysis of the EC Progress Reports and Enlargement Strategy 2015**

The Enlargement package for 2015 was finally published last week and BCSDN for the 7th consecutive year analyzed how the European Commission has treated the issue of civil society and how it assessed the civil society development in each of the country progress reports. In brief, this year's analysis shows the civil society has indeed become one of the key criteria for accession, and the Commission has put an increasing attention to the enabling environment for civil society development in the Enlargement countries through more systematic and unified monitoring methodologies. The biggest focus again is on the relations between public institutions and CSOs with enhanced attention to basic freedoms and financial visibility and sustainability. Read the full analysis [here](#).

[BCSDN]



- **Albania MPs Vote to Form Civil Society Council**

Albania's parliament has voted to set up a National Council for Civil Society in an attempt to create an organized structure that includes the voice of civil society in the policy-making process. The parties forming the ruling majority in parliament voted on 5th November to pass the **Law no. 119/2015** "For Establishment and Functioning of the National Council for Civil Society", which will be an autonomous advisory structure working closely with the Council of Ministers. The Government says it is a way to institutionalize collaboration with civil society in order to promote democracy and raise transparency in decision-making. However, opposition MPs did not support the initiative, claiming that the draft prepared by the government shows that it wishes only to control civil society, and it did not include suggestions coming from civil society and the Ombudsman's office, although they were invited to give their opinions about the draft in a commission meeting. More information is available [here](#).

[Balkan Insight]



- **Appeal to the Romanian President Signed by Over 80 CSOs**

More than 80 signatory CSOs have appealed to the Romanian President Klaus Iohannis to adopt concrete measures against corruption and reform of the state and the political elites. As a first step on the road towards a new type of politics, the signatory CSOs request the adoption of a set of integrity and competence criteria with respect to the future candidate for the position of prime minister and his cabinet, as well as the entire team in the Presidential Administration. In addition, they appeal for the Romanian President to initiate a wide consultation process with the citizens and with the CSOs and obtain a political commitment for all of the initiatives formed in the online space around the current civic protests in Romania to be employed through a process undertaken by all the main state institutions (including the Parliament and the Government). Their expectation from this process are legislative and institutional changes which address the problems currently raised by the citizens. They request that the specific reform proposals promoted by the CSOs in the last years are no longer ignored by the political decision-makers. The full appeal in Romanian language is available [here](#), and a translation in English is available [here](#).

[FDSC]



- **Adopted Regulation on CSO Financial Planning and Control in Croatia**

The new Regulation, coming into force on 9th November, 2015, determines the method of conducting self-assessment of the functioning of the system for financial management and control for non-profit organizations, as well as the methodology for the development and execution of financial plans. It is important to note that non-profit organizations need not to amend the provisions of their Statutes so as to make them compatible with the new Regulation; instead, they are advised to pass bylaws. Non-profit organizations shall prepare their 2016

financial plan in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Financial Operations and Accounting for Non-Profit Organizations. Organizations should prepare the first financial plan in accordance with the new Regulations for the period from 1st January to 31st December, 2017. More information is available [here](#).

[Croatian Office for Cooperation with NGOs]



- **CfP: akciJA – Grants for Individuals' Ideas (Deadline: 18.11.2015)**

Open Society Foundation Serbia invites individuals to submit project ideas that have unconventional approach and/or offer innovative solutions for changes of the practices and policies in the community, and which are related to the social development of Serbia. The aim of this Call is to enable implementation of ideas of individuals who have knowledge and/or experience in one of the thematic areas, and they need support to implement the vision and the broader social action. The initiatives can be an identification of new problems, proposing new solutions for a particular policy, the development of certain innovative practices or new approach to public advocacy for policy change in a given area. The project duration should be no longer than 9 months. The total amount of individual support will amount to RSD 800,000 (approx. EUR 6,600). Brief description of the project idea and CV should be submitted electronically by 18th November, 2015. More information is available [here](#).

[CRNPS]



- **CfP: UNDEF Project Grants (Deadline: 31.12.2015)**

The United Nations Democracy Fund invites CSOs to apply for funding for projects to advance and support democracy during the annual proposal window, which is open from 15th November to 31st December. Only on-line proposals during this period, in either English or French, will be accepted. UNDEF projects are two years long. Applicants can request a grant of a minimum of USD 100,000 and a maximum of USD 300,000. UNDEF supports projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations - both in the transition and consolidation phases of democratization. More information is available [here](#).

[UNDEF]



- **CfP: IPA - Youth, Women and Long-Term Unemployed in the Labour Market – Montenegro (Deadline: 01.02.2016)**

Under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the Ministry of Finance of Montenegro published a Call for Proposals with the specific objective to mobilize the relevant actors on the labour market in order to facilitate the access of long-term unemployed persons, with special focus on women and youth, into the labour market, through improving their skills, education and qualification. The total amount of funds made available under this grant is EUR 1,298,884.00. Any grant requested under this Call must fall between the minimum EUR 60,000 and maximum EUR 200,000, and represent maximum 90% of the total eligible costs of the action. The planned duration of the action should be no less than 6 months, and no more than 12 months. The deadline for the submission of applications is 1st February, 2015. More information is available [here](#).

[EuropeAid]



- **CfA: Webinar on Monitoring and Evaluation - 18-19 November**

The Center for Research and Policy Making is organizing a webinar on the topic of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). This webinar aims to raise awareness about the role of M&E in organizational learning and, consequently, in developing responsive policies that directly contribute toward the good governance agenda. It explains the significance of M&E in the EU integration process of the countries of Southeast Europe, and it also highlights the constructive role CSOs can play in regularly monitoring the policies and performance of government institutions. The webinar will be held on 18th and 19th November at 11:00 AM in two separate one-hour sessions. Representatives of civil society and civil servants from Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro are invited to participate. More information is available [here](#).

[CRPM]



- **CfA: Triple A Partners Regional Conference - 26-27 November, Pristina**

The conference will bring together CSOs who are interested in reforming legislation related to the provision of Triple A services (Access to Information, Advice, and Active help), including free legal aid. The conference will address several topics: Advocacy Roadmaps for the countries involved in the project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey); How the ongoing migration/refugee crisis is affecting the Western Balkans and Turkey; How the EU agreements with several countries will affect the region moving forward; How local NGOs (legal service providers) are responding to the crisis; Details of the Triple A Network, which will launch in 2016 and will be open to Triple A service providers throughout the Western Balkans and Turkey and the rest of Europe; and Local perspectives of free legal aid provision in the region. More information is available [here](#).

[ECAS]



- **CfA: Understanding the Influence of Ratings in the Third Sector: The Experience of Constructing an NGO Credibility Index in Greece (Deadline: 02.12.2015)**

The remarkable growth and global expansion of the civil society sector has over time created an intense selection problem for donors. The latter have responded to this challenge by introducing different kinds of requirements and assessment mechanisms in their programmes. Donors have, in this way, contributed to the partial professionalisation of the NGO sector. Indeed, NGOs have routinely undertaken time- and resource-intensive impact evaluations and effectiveness assessments. Moreover, an 'assessment culture' has been gradually embedded in the sector with the formulation of sector-wide ratings and rankings such as credibility indices. This presentation will elaborate on an attempt to create an NGO Credibility Index in Greece based on 157 structured interviews. It will analyse the methodology of the evaluation, the main hurdles in the implementation phase, and the core findings of the research. More information is available [here](#).

[QMUL]



- **Fortress Europe and Western Balkan as Its Soft Underbelly**

The latest migration movement towards the EU is using the Western Balkan States as one of the transit routes. The nature of this migration is that people are fleeing the war torn areas of North Africa and the Middle East, and they will not be stopped. If the EU allows the placing of walls in the path of this river made of people at the EU border, water will swell and flood the whole Western Balkans. The EU is inherently slow with its decision-making processes. This is especially true with respect to migration questions in previous decades. However, this will have to be addressed immediately in order to avoid a greater disaster that is inevitable with the current conduct of individual Member States. The EU Member States, the Western Balkan States and the illegal immigrants need

a silver-bullet policy that will solve this problem instantly. The very first step would be to treat all illegal migrants as legal migrants and/or redistribute current migrants evenly among all 28 EU Member States. The paper is available for download [here](#).

[EFB]



- **Issue 16 of the Assembly and Association Briefing**

Maina Kiai, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, has published the 16th issue of the newsletter Assembly and Association Briefing. In this issue: Kiai calls on Chile to eliminate “vestiges of dictatorship” detrimental to assembly rights; UNSR presents report to General Assembly, urges States to promote civil society by elevating its treatment to the same level as business; Experts urge Latin America and Caribbean: adopt trend-setting environmental agreement; UN expert urges Angola to release 14 activists detained for criticizing Government; Draft law threatens independence and existence of Kazakh NGOs, Kiai warns; Heyns and Kiai wrap up consultations for recommendations on facilitating assemblies; Freedom of association and assembly: By the numbers; Special Rapporteur news in brief: October 2015; and World briefing: Freedom of assembly and association in the news. The newsletter is available for download [here](#).

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