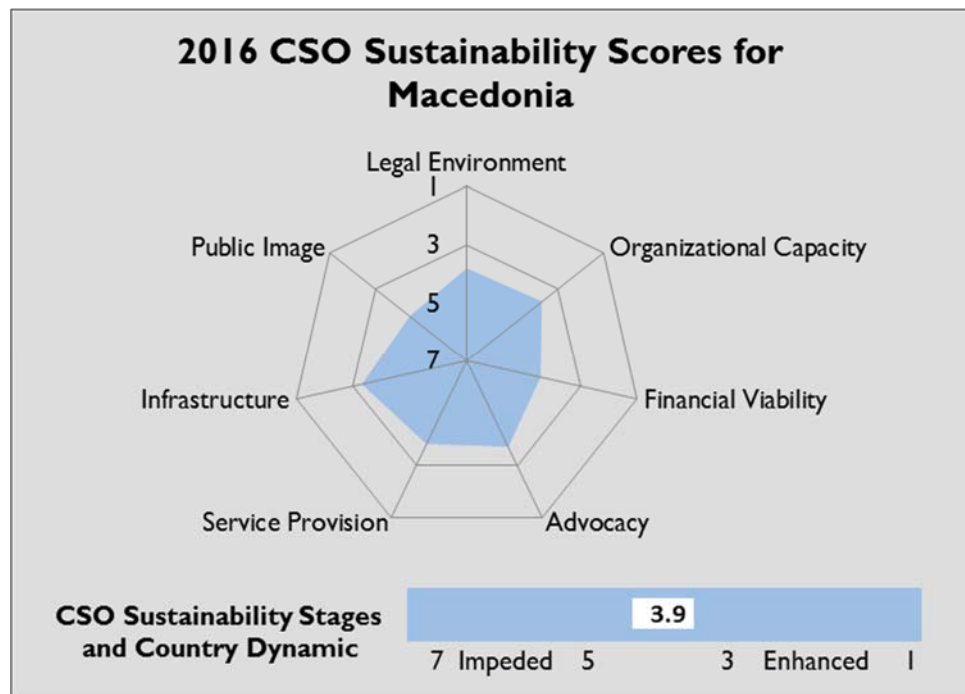


MACEDONIA



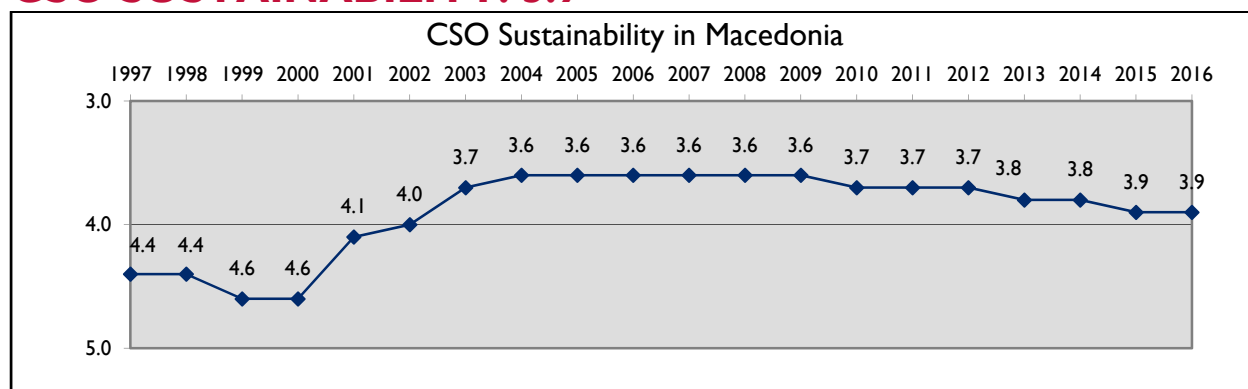
Capital: Skopje

Population: 2,100,025

GDP per capita (PPP): \$14,500

Human Development Index: 82

CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 3.9



The political situation in Macedonia continued to be unstable in 2016. As a result, CSOs found it increasingly difficult to access and cooperate with government institutions, and their involvement in policy development continued to deteriorate.

As part of the 2015 Przino Agreement, brokered by the EU and the US between the four main political parties—the ruling Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and Democratic Union for Integration (BDI); and the opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) and Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH)—Nikola Gruevski resigned as prime minister in January 2016. A technical government was formed to organize early parliamentary elections. On April 12, President Gjorge Ivanov pardoned fifty-six high-ranking officials suspected of involvement in illegal wiretapping, massive corruption, election-rigging, and other criminal wrongdoing. This development halted the Special Public Prosecutor (SPO) investigations under the Przino Agreement, unleashing massive protests dubbed the Colorful Revolution. Led by the #Protestiram (I Protest) movement and supported by

opposition parties, protesters set clear demands. Among the key demands were that the president withdraw the pardons and resign; the legality of the SPO be ensured; a separate court unit be established to process the alleged crimes and prioritize urgent reform priorities; and parliamentary elections be postponed until conditions for free and fair voting are established.

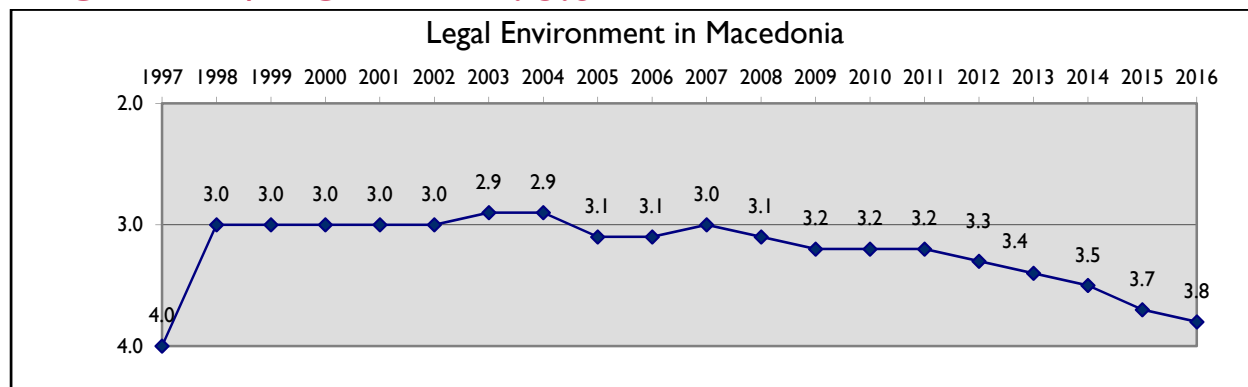
In May, the Constitutional Court ruled the parliament's January 18 dissolution unconstitutional, effectively halting the June 5 election and causing the parliament to reconvene on short notice. In late July, the four main political parties agreed to an annex to the Przino Agreement, again brokered by the EU and the US, to solve the political crisis. The annex addressed issues with the voters list (including removing phantom voters and the deceased) and media freedom; reaffirmed support to the SPO; and committed the parties to focus on inclusiveness in reform processes by involving a working group including civil society and experts in the parliament. On September 2, a new technical government, including ministers from the SDSM ranks, was sworn in to prepare elections for December 11. Throughout October, the SPO ramped up investigations into wiretapping and other scandals, presenting evidence of the direct involvement of former Prime Minister Gruevski and former chief of the Counter-Intelligence Bureau (UBK) Saso Mijalkov in wiretapping 5,817 phone numbers of high-ranking officials, journalists, business executives, and civic activists, among others.

Peaceful elections were finally held on December 11. The race was too close to call, with both VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM and their respective partners holding victory celebrations. After a re-run on December 25 in a single polling station, VMRO-DPMNE emerged as the winner, with fifty-one out of 120 seats (ten fewer than it had in the previous parliament). SDSM followed closely behind with forty-nine seats (fifteen more than in the previous parliament). Efforts to create a coalition government were ongoing at the end of the year.

The continued political crisis undermined development in Macedonia during the year. Massive emigration, especially of young people and people from rural areas, continued. The crisis also challenged public institutions' abilities to perform even their most basic duties, including disaster prevention and response. This was demonstrated during the floods in August in the Skopje area, which left twenty-two people dead and caused extensive damage to property and livestock; and during the series of earthquakes in September. In the absence of an effective government response, CSOs and activists quickly responded to these crises by providing humanitarian aid, clean-up, and transportation.

The official number of CSOs registered in the Central Register of Macedonia (CRM) as of December 2015 was 14,245. However, only 4,148 of these submitted annual accounts or financial statements and are therefore considered active. While CSOs were required to re-register under the Law on Associations and Foundations (LAF) passed in 2010, CRM was not given explicit authority to delete all CSOs that did not re-register or were inactive. In addition, there is no official number of organizations that have registered under the LAF. Data on the number of registered CSOs, as well as income, expenses, and employment structure in the CSO sector are only available from the CRM for a fee. CSOs involved in the working groups for the development of the new Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan 2016-2018 have raised this issue, though it still remains to be seen if the CRM will fulfill the commitment to make this data publicly available.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.8



The legal environment affecting CSOs in Macedonia continued to deteriorate in 2016, with increasing state harassment of activists and CSOs criticizing government policies.

During the spring protests by the Colorful Revolution, pro-government media called upon authorities to investigate CSOs' finances, prompting visits by the Financial Police to several CSOs. For example, the Financial Police visited Citizen's Association MOST on the day it held a press conference on its assessment of government institutions' readiness to organize free and fair elections; no charges had been filed against the organization by the end of the year. Pro-government media also disclosed the personal incomes of several CSOs and their staff who were prominent Colorful Revolution activists in order to discredit them and the movement as foreign funded. CSO leaders and academics have been summoned for questioning by the police, and civic activists who protest have been asked by police officers to show their IDs.

Furthermore, a month before the election, the Public Revenue Office began carrying out selective financial inspections of CSOs upon request of another unnamed state institution. By the end of the year, at least nineteen CSOs were visited by financial inspectors and several more had received notices announcing such visits. On December 9, 2016, the pro-governmental Civil Movement for Defense of Macedonia (GDOM) distributed flyers in the capital listing the names of dozens of CSO representatives and activists, primarily those that have worked with Foundation Open Society– Macedonia (FOSM). The flyers alleged that these individuals had received “mercenary” money and included copies of defamatory articles about some of the individuals. Threats against Macedonian CSOs peaked on December 17, 2016. During a protest by the ruling party that took place while the State Election Committee was deciding on complaints from the opposition party related to electoral fraud, VMRO-DPMNE chief Gruevski read a proclamation. Among other claims, it included a direct threat to “disobedient” CSO representatives and activists, namely that it will fight for the “de-Sorosization” of Macedonia, the strengthening of an independent civil sector, and regulation of financing of “foundations and NGOs” in line with models used in the most advanced democracies in the world.

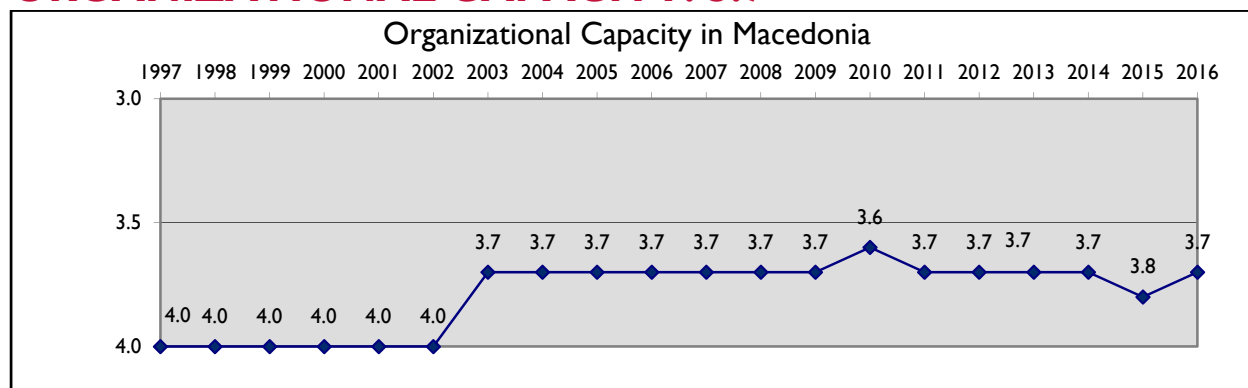
The LAF provides a broad framework for the operation of associations and foundations. Registration is generally fast, inexpensive, and easy to complete. The LAF is sufficiently clear with respect to organizational governance, scope of work, reporting obligations, and other aspects of CSOs' operations.

Tax treatment of CSOs remains unfavorable. CSOs do not receive special benefits as non-profit entities. On the contrary, the Law on Profit Tax stipulates less favorable regulations for CSOs compared to some profit-making entities. For example, while Article 32 of the Law on Profit Tax exempts micro and small companies from income tax as long as their total income yields a tax liability of less than \$53,000, similar exemptions are not available for CSOs.

The LAF allows CSOs to perform economic activities aligned with their statutory goals, although there are multiple interpretations on whether earned income is subject to taxation. CSOs can participate in public procurements at the national and local levels under the same conditions as other entities.

The CSO sector can access legal assistance from legal experts associated with a few organizations, mostly based in the capital. These legal experts provide mainly pro bono assistance because there are few donor programs or other types of support for such services.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 3.7



Organizational capacity continued to grow in 2016, primarily as a result of the growth in grassroots mobilization. The Colorful Revolution facilitated decentralized citizen mobilization, with protests in fifteen cities and rural areas, as well as among the diaspora. Beginning in September 2016, the civic action We Decide!, led by twenty-one CSOs, launched a campaign in more than twenty municipalities to encourage citizens to participate in the parliamentary elections.

While many CSOs have not established more direct links with their constituencies, there are examples of CSOs supporting marginalized groups—such as Megjashi-First Children Embassy, for children’s rights; LGBTI Center, for the LGBTI population; and Healthy Options Project Macedonia and Association for Health Education and Research, for reproductive rights—that have developed strong constituencies over the years.

In 2016, some CSOs reported government pressure on them or their constituencies when trying to raise public awareness of various issues, often resulting in self-censorship. For instance, when the women in Shuto Orizari, the largest Roma municipality, decided to protest their lack of access to reproductive health services, the mayor threatened them with sanctions, including a loss of state social support, causing them to abandon their plans for a protest.

Due to their dependence on limited, short-term project financing and a lack of human resources, few CSOs have devoted resources to establishing systems for short- or long-term planning, or monitoring and evaluation. CSOs typically prepare strategic plans only when required or directly supported by donors. By September 2016, the Civica Mobilitas program, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), had awarded twenty CSOs with eighteen-month institutional grants that included assistance in strategic planning. According to a self-evaluation conducted at the beginning of 2016 by the CSOs receiving these institutional grants, 68.6 percent reported having strategic plans; of this group, 53.1 percent had strategic plans covering 2016, while 46.1 percent had expired plans. Similarly, according to a Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organizations (TACSO) survey published in April 2016, 52 percent of respondent CSOs have strategic plans, out of which only 40 percent raised enough funding to implement the plans.

Boards are typically a formality and composed of those who undertake executive functions in the organization. There are several initiatives to improve this practice. For example, Civica Mobilitas provided training to its grantees that addressed the division of responsibilities within the organization, among other topics. Compared to smaller CSOs, it is more common for larger and well-established organizations to have a clear division of roles between boards of directors and executive staff.

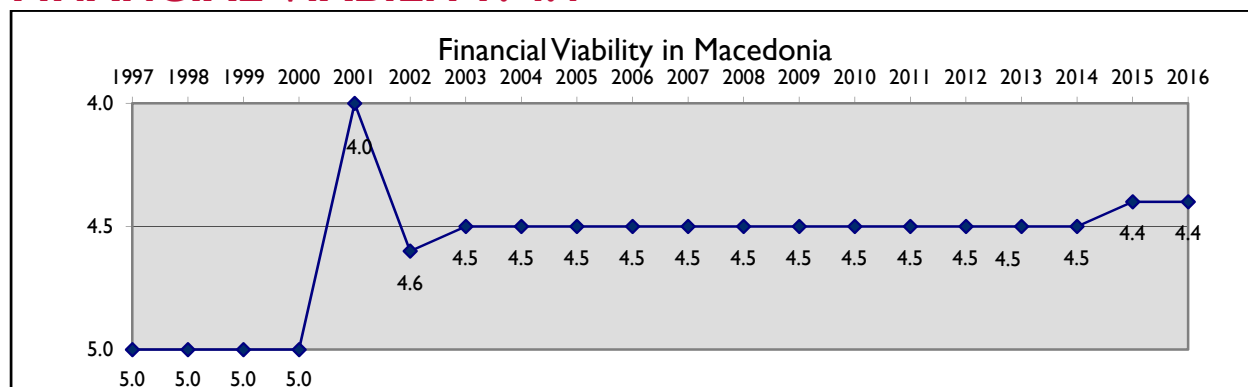
According to the most recent data available, there were only 1,990 full-time CSO staff members in 2015. Employees are generally hired on a project basis and are not afforded pension or health insurance benefits. Attrition of key CSO leaders and activists increased in 2016 due to frustration with the current political situation, as well as the regular generational change of CSO leaders. Very few CSOs are able to devote resources to personnel development or ongoing staff training. CSOs typically outsource accounting, IT, and other professional services.

Most grassroots CSOs depend solely on volunteers, while professional CSOs use very few volunteers. Official statistics on volunteering are not available, although according to the 2016 World Giving Index, just 7 percent of respondents reported participating in voluntary action in 2015, compared to 9 percent in 2014 and 14 percent in 2013.

Most CSOs lack strategic, organizational approaches to information communications technology (ICT). Although most grants allow for limited purchase of new or updated equipment, staff members often use their personal equipment. CSOs use the Internet and smartphones as their primary communication tools, including for accessing e-mail and social networks. The donation program Techsoup Balkans offers a wide range of software products to CSOs and public libraries for free or minimal administrative fees. So far, ninety-three CSOs have registered to participate in the program, with twenty-four obtaining software for small fees and twenty other organizations receiving donations of online access to Microsoft Office 365 for nonprofits to date.

By law, CSOs should have websites to publish annual financial reports. However, many do not have websites due to lack of funds, technical expertise, or internal will. There are no legal repercussions or clear enforcement procedures against such CSOs. For some organizations, Facebook pages are their only online presence.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 4.4



Financial viability did not change significantly in 2016. CSOs have not diversified their funding due to lack of opportunity and institutional support, as well as continued dependence on project funding. According to the most recent data available from CRM, in 2014 CSOs reported that 68 percent of their income came in the form of donations and grants.

As in previous years, CSO funding in 2016 mainly came from foreign sources, including the EU, USAID, SDC, the British Embassy, and the Netherlands Embassy. No significant changes were noted in terms of for-

eight funding levels during the year. The SDC-supported Civica Mobilitas program, which is expected to grant a total of €5.5 million to CSOs between October 2014 and September 2018, had awarded around €3.7 million to seventy-eight CSOs by the end of September 2016. The Delegation of the European Union (DEU) in Skopje launched a call for €5 million in multi-year grants through the Civil Society Facility in April and signed contracts with nineteen CSOs in December. CSOs can access EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) funds through the Ministry of Finance and DEU, respectively. However, due to language barriers and complex EU administrative requirements, smaller CSOs are generally unable to access these and other foreign sources of funding. In November, USAID launched a new five-year Civic Engagement Program managed by the East-West Management Institute that will provide long-term support to CSOs and networks.

State support to CSOs is insignificant. According to MCIC's 2016 Monitoring Matrix report for Macedonia, just 22 percent of respondent CSOs receive state support from the national budget, and such support accounts for more than 10 percent of the budgets of only 12 percent of respondent CSOs. Total state support to CSOs in 2016 was around €4.7 million, similar to the levels in 2015 (€4.8 million). State funds are distributed through several institutions, including the General Secretariat of the Government (through the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs); Agency for Youth and Sport; Directorate for Protection and Rescue; Fund for Pension and Disability Insurance; the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement; and the Ministries of Defense, Environment and Social Planning, Health, Justice, Labor and Social Policy, and Culture. Such funds tend to support project activities, not institutional needs or co-financing. Lottery proceeds are distributed to a limited number of CSOs through a non-transparent procedure. In 2016, this support to CSOs totaled €1.07 million.

Similarly, government support is marginal or non-existent in most municipalities, although there are some exceptions to this rule. According to the 2016 MCIC report, 17 percent of respondent CSOs receive more than 10 percent of their budgets from local level funds. The City of Skopje grants the most funding of any municipality. However, in 2016, it modified its funding policy to distribute funds to CSOs only on a reimbursement basis after activities are implemented. Strumica Municipality, by contrast, provides CSOs with funding in advance.

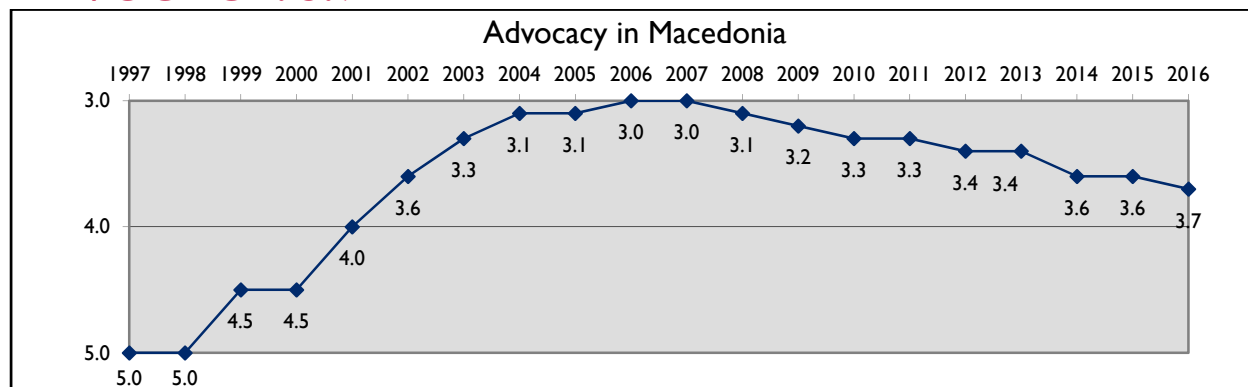
Individual philanthropy and volunteering are limited, although both appeared to increase somewhat in 2016 in response to the ongoing refugee crisis and the devastating August floods in Skopje. According to Giving Balkans (Catalyst and Horus), individuals and corporations donated €1.8 million for flood-related causes during the year. According to the 2016 World Giving Index, 26 percent of respondents reported donating to charities in 2015, compared to 35 percent in 2014 and 41 percent in 2013.

Corporate philanthropy is still underdeveloped. Businesses do not have strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR) or philanthropy programs to support CSOs. Businesses that decide to give to CSOs most often provide non-financial support. They also ask not to be identified as supporters when the recipient CSOs' activities are of a political nature, fearing repercussions from state authorities. For example, one business that openly supported the Colorful Revolution faced state harassment, financial inspections, and fines. Banks, on the other hand, offer less support to CSOs, and when they do support CSOs they tend to request something in return, such as public recognition for the donation.

With the exception of some social services, state institutions do not contract with CSOs. CSOs rarely contract with businesses to provide services, such as trainings or coordination of CSR activities. However, CSOs do manage to generate income from goods and services. According to CRM data, in 2014 CSOs reported €5.2 million (out of a total of €81 million in income) as income from selling products and another €4.7 million from income from services. Contributions from members are symbolic and only important in historically membership-based CSOs, such as the Association of Pensioners and some networks.

Very few organizations demonstrate financial transparency or undergo institutional financial audits, unless required by donors. Such audits typically are conducted on behalf of specific projects.

ADVOCACY: 3.7



While advocacy initiatives grew stronger in 2016, the prolonged political crisis has caused state institutions to be even less receptive to CSO input, which resulted in a net decline in advocacy during the year.

Implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Sector 2012-2017 was limited in 2016; by the end of the year, only two out of fifty-two measures had been implemented. The government adopted a Decision on the Establishment of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society in May 2016, only two working days after it was presented to CSOs, not allowing for additional consultations. Seventy-five CSOs that had strongly advocated in favor of establishing the Council sent a joint reaction to the Government Secretariat, laying out their concerns on the Decision, including the lack of time for quality consultations; insufficient representation of CSOs in the Council; the inclusion of state officials on the Council who were not sufficiently senior; vague requirements for selecting candidates to the Council; and a lack of mechanisms to monitor the process. Despite these objections, the government still proceeded with the selection of candidates, resulting in a boycott of the process and another statement signed by eighty-nine CSOs. Thirteen CSO representatives were selected, most of whom were unknown in the sector and do not work in the areas they represent on the Council. The government had not confirmed the candidates by the end of 2016, so the Council is still not active.

Other mechanisms promoting CSO engagement in policy making are also ineffective. For example, CSOs are still not included in government working groups on EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funding, despite the existence of the IPA CSO mechanism, a network of 217 CSOs devoted to supporting public institutions in planning EU pre-accession assistance for structural reforms. In addition, the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) was problematic. CSOs boycotted the process after unregistered CSOs were allowed to vote for the RYCO representative. At the same time, the National Youth Council of Macedonia remains unrecognized by the state. The National Strategy of Youth was adopted in February 2016 but with limited consultations, no budget, and no action plan.

Despite technical improvements to the Unique National Electronic Registry of Regulations (ENER), public consultations on draft legislation continued to deteriorate. In 2016, 505 law items were reviewed, 453 of which involved an obligation to consult the public. However, electronic consultations were only organized on twenty-one (or 5 percent) of these, a considerable drop from 2015. For sixteen of the twenty-one draft laws made subject to public consultations via ENER, the minimum timeframe of ten days for consultations was not respected. The majority (76 percent) of laws, including 238 draft pieces of legislation which should have been subject to consultations, were adopted through urgent procedures, which circumvent the consultation requirement and are intended to be used only for emergency situations. In addition, a majority of legislation proposed by the government is discussed in closed government sessions, for which minutes are not available to the public.

The only example of wide participation of civil society in 2016 was in the development of the OGP National Action Plan 2016-2018. However, the level of cooperation on OGP decreased after a fervently pro-government media personality known for his inflammatory speech was nominated to participate in OGP working groups. While CSOs continue to participate in OGP initiatives, they are more cautious, and have little trust in the quality of cooperation.

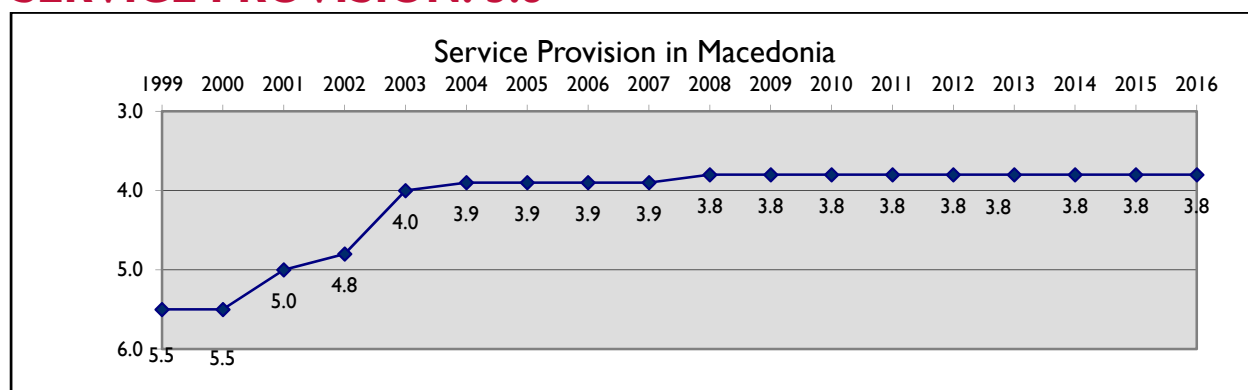
Despite these setbacks, advocacy was strong in 2016. The Colorful Revolution, led by the #Protestiram movement, was the most significant advocacy campaign of 2016. At first the Colorful Revolution consisted mainly of protests, but the campaign expanded after the president pardoned officials allegedly involved in corruption. Protesters made demands, including revocation of the pardons, resignation of the president, postponement of elections until free and fair elections could be assured, and establishment of a special court unit within the Criminal Court for handling SPO cases. Several of the demands, such as revoking the pardons, were met, while others were still pending at the end of the year. In July, a group of CSOs and experts presented the Blueprint for Urgent Democratic Reforms at a public conference. The Blueprint aims to provide incentives, guidelines, and actions for relevant stakeholders to restore democratic standards and values in Macedonia, make progress in key policy areas, and ultimately, create conditions for free and fair elections.

Other advocacy activities targeted health and environmental issues. HIV Platform held a protest in front of the Ministry of Health in response to dramatic funding cuts to HIV treatment and prevention. While the budget was still cut, these efforts resulted in a significant amount of funding being allocated to CSOs working on this issue. In addition, the Ministry of Health included CSOs in the process of creating criteria to receive these funds. The association Let's Go Macedonia initiated a law to regulate the donation of excess food, although it did not enter into parliamentary procedure by the end of 2016. Numerous activities focused on environmental issues also took place in 2016. In Tetovo, citizens protested to highlight unresolved issues with landfills and air pollution, leading a factory to close down. The Civic Initiative Arsenia undertook numerous activities regarding the high levels of arsenic in the drinking water in Gevgelija. While these efforts raised public awareness of the problem, officials took no steps to resolve the problem.

Pro-governmental groups also engaged in advocacy in 2016. In response to the Colorful Revolution, the informal pro-governmental initiative GDOM organized large counter-protests, demonstrations, and debates in order to create a counter-narrative in favor of the government. The movement attacked human rights activists and CSOs critical of the government, and called on the Constitutional Court to temporarily halt the operation of, or dissolve, CSOs that are “demolishing Macedonia.”

No new initiatives were launched to improve the enabling environment for CSOs in 2016. The 2015 initiative to amend the tax treatment of CSO operations also remained unaddressed.

SERVICE PROVISION: 3.8



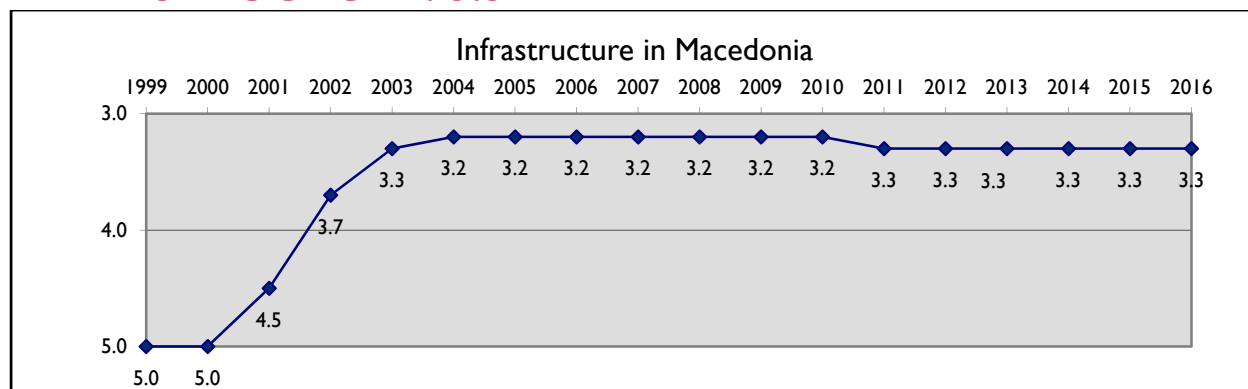
CSOs continue to provide a range of basic social services, such as social protection of children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups; and humanitarian relief for refugees and migrants. However, such services receive little support from local or central governments, making it difficult to sustain the provision of quality services. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy continues to finance CSOs in a non-transparent manner; in general, little information is made public on the criteria for selection, the selected organizations, or the results of grantees' work. The City of Skopje, which supports the services of many CSOs based in the capital, decided to reimburse service providers for the costs of services only after services are rendered, even though most CSOs lack the capital to provide services without advance payment. Around 95 percent of funding for CSO-provided services comes from foreign donors.

The devastating floods in Skopje in August prompted CSOs and activists to provide humanitarian aid, largely standing in for the state's emergency response. Volunteers immediately stepped forward to provide basic humanitarian supplies and help in clean-up and transportation. In addition, CSO volunteers and activists—many with the help of foreign funding—continued to support stranded migrants and refugees at the Macedonian borders with Greece and Serbia by monitoring the situation and ensuring support services.

CSO services generally reflect the needs of their target groups, which are sometimes determined through needs assessments linked to project or grant requirements. However, CSOs often do not have sufficient funding to entirely meet the needs of their beneficiaries. Some CSOs produce analyses and research publications, which are typically provided to state institutions and the public free of charge.

The state is still unwilling to establish service partnerships with CSOs or to decentralize services. CSOs continue to advocate for the establishment of registers and licensing in particular sectors in order to improve this situation by providing mechanisms to ensure the quality of services. For example, Health Education and Research Association continues to advocate for a registry of CSOs working on HIV issues.

INFRASTRUCTURE: 3.3



The infrastructure supporting the sector did not change significantly in 2016. The EU-funded TACSO Resource Center offers diverse support, including a help desk, capacity strengthening services, and information on calls for proposals. FOSM (through the USAID-funded CSP) and MCIC (through the Civica Mobilitas program) also offer in-person and online services and information to CSOs. The new five-year USAID-funded Civic Engagement Program, launched in late November, will support the efforts of Macedonian civil society and youth organizations to engage with citizens, the private sector and government stakeholders and institutions on issues of public interest.

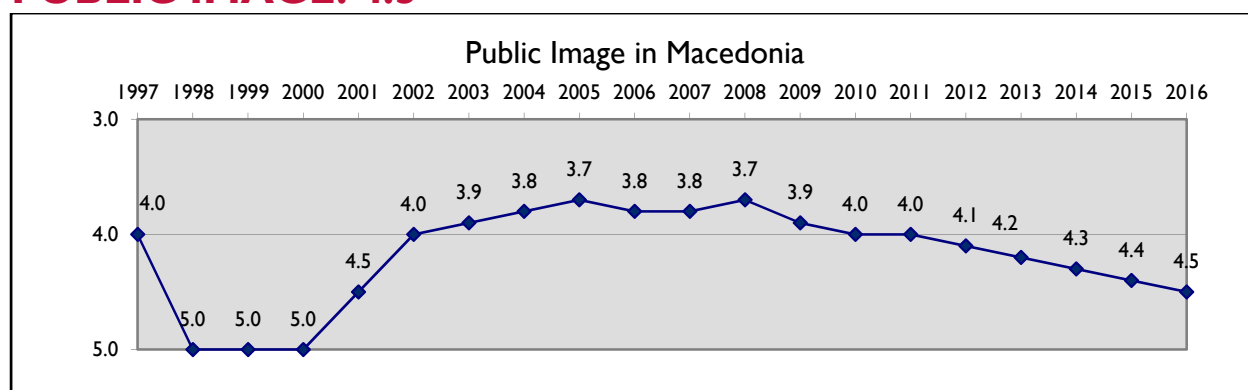
MCIC and FOSM re-grant SDC and USAID funding, respectively. Four CSO consortiums re-grant DEU funding for small projects, averaging in size between €3,000 and €5,000. In 2016, DEU also published a call within the Civil Society Facility and allocated almost €5 million for grants that have re-granting components.

CSOs often share information through the TACSO e-mail list and thematic coalitions. In 2016, the IPA CSO mechanism, a coalition of 217 CSOs from different fields of work, held elections for its sector representatives and offered extensive capacity-building programs to involved CSOs.

Highly qualified trainers offer various types of training, including more advanced options. CSOs most frequently access training through CSP, Civica Mobilitas, and TACSO. Trainings are typically provided for free, and transportation costs are often covered. Training materials are available in Macedonian and to some extent in Albanian.

Intersectoral partnerships have not grown. In 2015, Konekt published the first-ever study on CSO-business cooperation, based on research conducted in 2014. Although about half of CSOs indicated that they had cooperated with businesses, only 15.5 percent of the business sector reported having some cooperation with CSOs. At the local level, there are a few examples of CSO-government cooperation. For example, the City of Skopje, in cooperation with the Volunteer Center, Civica Mobilitas, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, festival Taksirat, and Youth Cultural Center from Bitola, organized an NGO and volunteering fair in December.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.5



The public image of CSOs continued to deteriorate in 2016. Public attacks, hate speech, and smear campaigns against critical CSOs and activists by pro-government media became more frequent and direct during the year. In particular, pro-government media demonized the Colorful Revolution protests, connecting them with ISIS while labeling protesters as foreign agents and “destroyers of Macedonian history.” Senior-level officials too have openly targeted their critics. The former prime minister labeled CSOs as “Soros hordes” and opposition party servants, while the president sought information from government agencies in neighboring countries on “dangerous” CSOs and activists. Other representatives of public institutions and high-ranking officials, such as the President of the Anti-Discrimination Commission and the Deputy Minister of Interior, also made disparaging remarks about CSOs during the year.

Aside from the smear campaigns, journalists—except for those affiliated with non-profit media outlets such as NovaTV and BIRN—are generally unaware of CSOs’ role in society and are not interested in covering CSO issues. However, in 2016, independent media showed more interest in CSO expertise and work on issues surrounding the political crisis, including rule of law and anti-corruption measures. Although rare, there were cases of cooperation between CSOs and media, such as between MCIC and TV Telma through the USAID-funded M-Media Program, and between MOST and NovaTV.

Although most of the population still trusts CSOs, public trust has decreased since 2013. According to TACSO research from April 2016, the percentage of the public who trust CSOs fell from 59.3 percent in 2013 to 50.5 percent in April 2015 before increasing slightly to 53 percent in April 2016.

As described above, the government continues to have a contentious relationship with CSOs that criticize its policies. According to Konekt's research, businesses only have a modest level of trust in CSOs: one-third of companies trust CSOs, one-third are neutral, and one-third do not trust CSOs.

Leading CSOs use typical means, such as press releases and press conferences, to publicize their work. In addition, many CSOs, especially informal initiatives, increasingly use social media to disseminate information, generate support, and call for action on particular issues. At the same time, CSOs report practicing self-censorship in their communications with the media. Watchdog organizations have more developed public relations, but only with media that are open to criticism of the government.

Generally, only leading CSOs publish annual reports on their websites. Most CSOs implementing foreign-funded projects regularly submit activity reports, but only to donors. Self-regulation in the sector has not developed. No code of conduct for the sector exists.