



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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ABOUT BCSDN

The Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) is a regional network of local civil society development organisations (CSOs) from the Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey).

Its **VISION** is sustainable peace, harmony, and prosperity of societies in the Balkan region.

Its **MISSION** is to empower civil society and influence European and national policies towards a more enabling environment for civil society development in order to ensure sustainable and functioning democracies in the Balkans.

BCSDN's **GOALS** and **OBJECTIVES** are:

1. Increased role of civil society by strengthening its voice in policy- and decision-making process on national, regional and EU level;
2. Promoted civil dialogue between civil society actors, state institutions and the European Union in order to influence public policy;
3. Developed advocacy knowledge and skills of civil society actors as a base for achieving greater impact; and
4. Strengthened communication, coordination, and cooperation between civil society actors in the Balkan region.

METHODS OF WORK

BCSDN realizes its goals mainly through advocacy and lobbying activities, by:

- Developing joint positions and statements on initiatives and areas of interest common to all member organizations and taking necessary action;
- Coordinating and cooperating with other organizations, networks and other actors on joint positions and initiatives;
- Coordinating cooperation between its members and developing joint projects and initiatives;
- Facilitating the exchange of information and experience between its members and national and local state institutions and the EU;
- Coordinating and compiling research and relevant information;
- Coordinating capacity-building and other events.

BCSDN is a registered foundation under the Macedonian Law on Citizens Associations and Foundations (Official Gazette of RM No. dated 31/98 and 29/2007) as of 30th September 2009 with the Decision no. 3012009172866 of the Central Register of the Republic of North Macedonia (CRNM). BCSDN's identification number is 6524710 and the tax identification number is 4057009503419.

NETWORK MEMBERS & ORGANS

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

MEMBERS

1. Bulgarian Center for Non-Profit Law (BCNL), Bulgaria
2. Center for Development of NGOs (CRNVO), Montenegro;
3. Centre for Information Services, Cooperation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS), Slovenia;
4. Center for Promotion of Civil Society (CPCS), Bosnia and Herzegovina;
5. Civic Initiatives, Serbia;
6. Diakonia Agapes, Albania;
7. Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO), Serbia;
8. Civil Society Development Foundation (FDCS), Romania
9. Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Albania; (consultative member)
10. Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF), Kosovo;
11. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Macedonia;
12. Opportunity Associates Romania (OAR), Romania;
13. Partners Albania for Change and Development, Albania;
14. Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV), Turkey

The Council is the highest organ of BCSDN and is composed of one authorised representative per each organisation with member status. The Council is chaired by the Chairperson of the Council, who are selected on an annual, rotating basis.

The Board is the governing and supervisory organ body of BCSDN. It consists of six to eight members: Chairperson of the Board, Deputy Chairperson of the Board and four to six members. The mandate of the Board members is 3 years. The current Board mandate has started on June 19th 2020.

BOARD MEMBERS (MANDATE UNTIL 2023)

1. Tina Divjak, Slovenia, Chair of the Board;
2. Taulant Hoxha, Kosovo
3. Aida Daguda, Bosnia and Herzegovina,
4. Klotilda Kosta, Albania
5. Rana Kotan, Turkey

Ms. Bojana Selakovic from Civic Initiatives, Serbia, formally resigned from the Board in December 2022, following her resignation as Program Director of CI.

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

The Executive Director is the major administrative and financial official and represents BCSDN with other institutions, networks, and donors. The Executive Director is appointed by the Board and participates in Council and Board sessions without the right to vote. As of September 1st 2020, BCSDN's Executive Director is Biljana Spasovska.

PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The new mid-term strategy of BCSDN was adopted in 2021. This strategy has been adopted after thorough discussions and comprehensive assessment of the realization of the objectives from the 2017-2020 strategy. In line with the newly defined objectives, BCSDN will be contributing towards the following objectives:

1. To facilitate a common understanding of the enabling environment for civil society development and a recognition of its role in the sustainable development of the region and its accession into the EU;
2. To strengthen CSO capacities and their place in functioning democracies;
3. To increase the collaboration and the recognition of the network with and among the core stakeholders;
4. To improve the functioning, communication and collaboration of the network.

TARGET GROUP & AREA

BCSDN target group are CSOs working on civil society development (CSDev) in the Balkan region. The direct beneficiaries are local civil society development and resource organisations. With its activities, the network targets stakeholders such as national institutions and international governmental organisations (IGOs). Among national institutions, the focus is on national public bodies and/or offices for cooperation with CSOs in member countries. Among IGOs, in focus are the EU institutions, Council of Europe, the Regional Cooperation Council, the Western Balkan Fund and related inter-governmental initiatives in the Balkan region. BCSDN promotes the principle of inclusiveness of marginalised and vulnerable groups in the society (incl. Roma community, inhabitants of rural areas). BCSDN works in countries of the Balkan region, Europe and internationally, according to its mission, vision, and goals.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

In a prolonged worldwide crisis, in 2022, BCSDN continued its activities toward strengthening CSOs' role and creating a more enabling environment for civil society development in the Balkans. The network realised a complete cycle of monitoring the civil society enabling environment in the six Western Balkan countries and Turkey and published the Monitoring Matrix Regional Report for 2022. Through evidence-based advocacy, BCSDN collaborated with regional and international stakeholders to emphasise the importance of civil society in development processes. BCSDN advocated for a more conducive environment towards civil society and a more inclusive EU approach toward including CSOs in policy-making processes. The Regional Civil Society Hub has amplified its ongoing commitment to safeguarding civic space by providing ten regional and 28 ad hoc grants, responding to the immediate needs of CSOs, and supporting innovative actions. Lastly, the network continued its commitment to promote civil society accountability and firmed its engagement in contributing to global platforms

and international partnerships by taking new roles within the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness.

IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

1. FACILITATING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND A RECOGNITION OF ITS ROLE IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION AND ITS ACCESSION INTO THE EU

One of BCSDN main objectives is to increase the understanding among the wider audience that for the civil society to be effectively tackling societal challenges, the existence of an environment that is enabling for the functioning and further development of the civil society is essential. The strategic approach is to utilise the Monitoring Matrix (MM) as the framework onto which a consensus shall be established, and which has the tools for identifying key measures that need institutional consolidation. The MM findings have been the basis for BCSDN members' national-level advocacy and for the regional-level advocacy conducted and coordinated by BCSDN towards the EU, as well as for international advocacy (such as towards other international organisations, Council of Europe, OECD, UN, etc.) through which the policy makers and donors in the region might be influenced.

Monitoring and Promoting an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development

After carefully considering the complexity underlying the Monitoring Matrix methodology in 2021 and with a deeper understanding of the shifting dynamics in monitored areas, BCSDN has opted for an alternative approach during the last year. This allowed the network to present unveiling findings more appropriately.

BCSDN's members implementing the Monitoring Matrix in 2022 completed the field research and their draft reports, after which the EO focused on the publication of the regional report. The latest monitoring findings of 2021 showed a relatively stable and (formally) enabling environment. However, CSOs in the WB countries operated in a prolonged crisis and continuous political instability. Numerous challenges and restrictions were reported in practice, as well as insecurities and instabilities that continuously challenged their skilfulness and capacities to influence as societal change actors. With certain delays, the Monitoring Matrix Country reports have been published by the end of 2022. The countries and regional reports are available [here](#).

BCSDN's research through the Monitoring Matrix has provided a powerful platform for BCSDN to continue advocating for a more enabling environment for civil society development in the region.

The Monitoring Matrix preliminary regional findings were shared with more than 40 CSOs' representatives, donors, journalists, and individuals at an [insightful event](#) in Belgrade, in April, within the project: "Improved CSOs responses to the pandemic and post-pandemic challenges in the Western Balkans" , funded by the Balkan Trust for Democracy. Through interactive discussions that focused on innovative ways of responding to current crises-induced limitations in civic space and empowering citizens

- both physically and digitally, the participants provided valuable recommendations on how CSOs, by establishing partnerships and strengthening alliances with other actors concerned, could emerge out of this crisis more resilient and prepared to respond to the new challenges imposed. As a follow-up, BCSDN EO published a detailed overview titled: [“Joint Action for Promoting Civic Space and a more Resilient Civil Society”](#). The document summarises valuable exchanges on the state of enabling environment for civil society development, including those that occurred during Covid-19. It highlights the civic space threats on WBT and EU levels. BCSDN has also taken a vital role in gathering data to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on civil society throughout the Western Balkans. Utilising our [Balkan Civic Practices platform](#), the EO compiled [regional updates](#) that included vital information such as civic space violations, role changes within civil societies, and effective CSOs strategies serving constituencies’ needs during 2021.

BCSDN’s Acting Executive Director, Ms. Anja Bosilkova-Antovska took part in the online regional forum [“Civil society organisations response and adaptability”](#) organised by CRNVO, within a regional project led by Partners Albania for Change and Development. During her presentation, Ms. Bosilkova- Antovska highlighted the Monitoring Matrix research findings to explore how civil society in Western Balkans has experienced the direct effect of COVID-19 on their operations and ability to remain accountable towards those they serve. She outlined several complexities CSOs’ encountered with while navigating the unprecedented crisis.

With issues of anti-money laundering / Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regulations increasingly affecting the whole region, and the increased activities of WBT members on this topic, BCSDN received [support](#) from ECNL, as part of its Global Expert Hub, to facilitate better regional exchange and learning, and stronger coordination and collaboration on the regional level. In September, Ms. Anja Bosilkova-Antovska from BCSDN joined the [2022 Meeting of Global Expert Hub on AML/CFT](#) organised by ECNL, which focused on innovative digital technology and ways to strengthen FATF standards to combat money laundering worldwide. The meeting also provided an opportunity for a [first in-person regional coordination gathering](#) to discuss joint priorities, identify shared difficulties and create an action plan for the upcoming regional activities. The aim is to contribute towards increased awareness, knowledge, and capacities for AML advocacy, stronger regional cooperation and joint advocacy efforts in the region, and increased contribution and involvement of WBT CSOs in international and global AML/CFT initiatives.

Contribution to Global Monitoring and Advocacy Trends

BCSDN’s long-term cooperation with CIVICUS and contribution towards the CIVICUS Monitor continued through 2022. The network has been regularly monitoring, gathering data, and reporting on the developments in the area of freedom of association, assembly, and expression, in the countries in the region, with the support of some member organisations. BCSDN’s regular reporting and timely alarming [have put Serbia on the most recent watch list of the CIVICUS Monitor](#), creating awareness of the state of the civic freedoms in the county and provoking public reactions against its leadership.

BCSDN resumed its partnership with USAID and FHI 360 to release the [2021 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index \(CSOSI\) for North Macedonia](#) as part of a

comprehensive report from 24 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The analysis considers seven dimensions when measuring CSO sustainability: legal environment, organisational capacity, financial viability, advocacy service provision, sectoral infrastructure, and public image. The findings were presented in November at an [in-person event](#) as part of its launch.

Promoting Civil Society as a Competent, Democratic Actor in the EU Accession Process

Immediate results and impact include:

BCSDN advocated towards key stakeholders to promote the role of civil society within and for the accession process of the Western Balkans and Turkey

In 2022, BCSDN participated in several meetings that provided valuable opportunities for advocacy towards key stakeholders to promote the role of civil society within and for the accession process of the Western Balkans and Turkey.

In April, Ms. Bosilkova- Antovska also participated in the public debate [“Monitoring the Rule of Law for EU Member States and Candidates: Bridging the Gap”](#) organised by the European Policy Institute (EPI) in Skopje. On this occasion, Ms. Bosilkova-Antovska highlighted the significance of civil society and its impact on the rule of law in Enlargement countries, along with experiences from BCSDN work on Monitoring Matrix. Additionally, she emphasised how EU instruments such as the EU Civil Society Guidelines can help to strengthen those efforts for a better future.

Following the EU’s approach in supporting civil society in the Enlargement countries and advocating for civil society to be recognized and adequately supported as a competent partner in the EU enlargement process, in May, before the official publishing of the EU Civil Society Guidelines 2021- 2027, BCSDN provided its [opinion](#), urging to have the document published and adopted without delay, recognising civil society as an integral part of this process.

In June, BCSDN's Acting Executive Director and WBT members' representatives joined the EU TACSO 3 WBT Civil Society Forum 2022. The event officially announced the new Guidelines for Support to Civil Society in Enlargement countries 2021- 2027 and discussed the recent civil society developments in the enlargement countries. As part of the joint advocacy efforts, BCSDN emphasised its goal to ensure that CSOs' voices are heard throughout the process.

For the 13th consecutive time, BCSDN prepared an [analysis of the annual European Commission Enlargement Package](#), assessing the progress made in civil society development and dialogue with public institutions in Enlargement countries. The background analysis, set against the Monitoring Matrix, this year was titled “WBT Civil Society in the New Geopolitical Reality: A Crisis as an Opportunity for Restoring EU Enlargement Credibility?”, notice that besides the EU acknowledgment of WBT CSOs in the EU accession and reform processes, a consistent and comprehensive assessment of civil society treatment in the enlargement countries is still lacking.

Following the civil society developments on the EU level, initiated and recommended by the European Parliament on the Status of NPOs and a common single market for associations, BCSDN published its [position](#) on EC Consultations on the matter, emphasising the need for the Western Balkans and Turkey as aspiring EU members to have their say in the process. While BCSDN welcomes this initiative and believes it is vital for all European CSOs, it still points out that only harmonised regulation could eradicate barriers and promote the benefit of a single market.

Promoting improved funding models that enable CSOs' work

In January, BCSDN provided detailed feedback to DG NEAR/TACSO's IPA CSF Media Programme 2021-2023 consultations. In a [statement](#), the network expressed its serious concerns regarding the effectiveness and credibility of the IPA CSF programme. To ensure that EU values are properly upheld throughout the accession process, BCSDN urged better recognition of CSOs' position and needs in the region to enable meaningful participation. BCSDN underlined the importance of CSOs as key partner in promoting EU values and supporting accession processes. By recommending greater reliance on CSOs, BCSDN also urged the EU to increase support through IPA funding for independent civil society within the region, allowing them a critical role in socio-economic development.

2. TO STRENGTHEN CSO CAPACITIES AND THEIR ROLE IN FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACIES;

BCSDN believes that in times of active pressure on civil society and civic space, civil society actors need to ensure they retain their core missions, integrity, legitimacy, and high level of trust. Civil society in all its forms has an important role in holding all stakeholders, including itself, to the highest levels of accountability. At the same, to be able to fight back, CSOs need to work more closely together and join forces for achieving common goals, and to protect and expand their civic space. Building on its own experience and learning the power of regional cooperation first-hand, BCSDN committed to supporting collaborative regional CSOs' actions for promoting civic space and supporting others to be more accountable actors in driving positive change.

Sub-granting support launched to support CSOs capacities for promoting civic space

The Regional Civil Society Development Hub continued the support offered with the re-granting component in 2022 by providing two types of grants:

- Regional multi-action country grants aimed to continue the funding provided to the regional initiatives already supported in the previous year, focused on wider civil society participation, and enhanced cooperation in the region for promoting civic space.
- Ad-hoc grants aimed to provide rapid support to CSOs for immediate actions aimed to protect or advance the civic space.

Following the successful completion of the grant contract in 2021 and the positive feedback on the relevance of the re-granting programme along with the absence of funding for regional actions, in 2022, with SIDA's extended support, BCSDN provided

additional assistance to Hub's beneficiaries. BCSDN invited the Hub's regional beneficiaries which successfully completed their projects in the previous year to submit their project proposals for the restricted Call for project proposals.

The overall objective of the Call remained unchanged, focused on supporting regional networks in the Western Balkans that will contribute to wider participation of civil society groups and enhanced regional CSOs' cooperation in promoting civic space. The specific objectives of the call published in 2020 remained unchanged, focused on the contribution to a more enabling environment for the CSOs in the WB region and their effective, transparent, and accountable work in protecting civic space. The restricted call was focused on supporting project proposals for activities ensuring sustainability and increased promotion of the with the previous projects' accomplishments and/or activities to strengthen the internal functioning, capacities and accountability of the networks supported. Within this call, 9 grants were awarded to regional networks comprising follow-up activities or continuation of a previous activity, among which: communication of results and achievements accomplished with previous projects; improving constituency accountability (e.g. institutionalising feedback processes and two-way conversations, participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning on the work done); and strengthening of internal processes (e.g. capacity building of the network, knowledge transfer, sharing lessons learnt, stock-taking).

The regional projects supported by the Hub aimed to improve the policy dialogue among CSOs and public authorities at different levels and foster citizens' engagement in decision-making processes, thus encouraging new ideas on conducting advocacy. The supported actions focused on enhancing the advocacy capacities of CSOs, increasing policymakers' awareness, promoting innovative CSO- businesses cooperation, reinforcing research and policymaking, internal CSO reorganisation, and building knowledge and infrastructure for increased financial CSO sustainability.

The Call for Ad-Hoc grants was open until the 1st of September 2022 continuing the support provided to the CSO efforts in promoting civic space in the Western Balkans. The ad-hoc grants aimed to provide rapid funding for CSOs immediate needs or innovations, in the form of direct expert support or funding for various regional actions, contributing to strengthening regional cooperation in promoting civic space.

As in the previous period, the call focused on two streams of support:

- The immediate need mechanism aiming to provide support for civil society actors who prompted by unpredicted events must immediately respond to the current challenges or recognize an opportunity for influencing public opinion and policy processes.
- The innovation stream referring to actions for the promotion or development of new approaches and methods of working and/or engaging with constituencies and stakeholders, or other innovative solutions to address the challenges CSOs are facing.

In 2022, BCSDN successfully [awarded](#) 28 grants to advance the Western Balkans' civic space and contribute to a more conducive environment for civil society development.

The actions addressed the challenges mainly related to influencing public opinion and policy process, advocating changes in draft laws, inducing public debates, and increasing citizen engagement through innovative participation mechanisms.

Contributing to Improved CSO Accountability

BCSDN continued the activities to support more enhanced and accountable civil society in the region within the globally recognized networks CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) and the Global Standard for CSO Accountability. The Global Standard, as a reference standard that captures a globally shared dynamic understanding of CSO accountability, was [recognized](#) in the new DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021- 2027. This recognition was also a part of BCSDN's efforts to promote the Global Standard accountability commitments in essential international programs and documents correlated to effective civil society operations and enhanced civic space globally.

BCSDN published its first research on "[Constituent Led Accountability in the Western Balkans](#)" alongside the document "[Where Do We Stand vis-à-vis the Istanbul Principles?](#)", thus paving the way to stronger civil society engagement while allowing for meaningful dialogue and action towards greater CSO accountability.

On a regional level, BCSDN actively promoted the Global Standard for CSO Accountability and followed the activities aligned with the Civil Society Codes in Albania and North Macedonia. Through participation at the MCIC Workshop on "[Accountable Work and Ethical Financing of Macedonian CSOs](#)", BCSDN's Network and Partnership Coordinator, Ms. Marija Vishinova Shemova, highlighted the network's work on "dynamic accountability" and positive practices within the Global Standard framework. To celebrate Global Accountability Week 2022, BCSDN organised a [regional event](#) focused on donors'- CSOs' relations and efforts for building accountable and resilient societies in the Western Balkans. As a part of its efforts to strengthen regional CSO accountability practices, BCSDN's Regional Accountability Community of Practice (RACoP) was [launched](#) in November, providing a platform for civil society actors across the region to share experiences and knowledge and further their understanding of "dynamic accountability". As a follow-up, BCSDN EO organized [the first gathering](#) for members' introduction and insight into upcoming RACoP activities in December.

In line with BCSDN's efforts to strengthen the CSOs' capacities across the region, along with Hub's strategic support, in June, BCSDN EO conducted [a two-day training](#) for the regional grantees and the monitoring officers of the Hub on Communication, Advocacy, and Networking Skills. The regional workshop took place in Struga, providing the participants with an agenda full of lively discussions, learning opportunities, and skills-building. The follow-up activity from the training is foreseen to spill over in 2023, ensuring continuous cooperation amongst the journalists, monitoring officers, and grantees in the learning process of effectively communicating the achievements from the conducted activities.

In the past year, BCSDN has started its engagement in a new area of work: Civil Society and Private Sector engagement for protecting civic space. In March, the first regional conference: "[Unusual Allyships for Common Good: CSO – Private Sector Cooperation](#)" was held to create powerful collaborations between community members and private sector stakeholders. It served as a platform for exchanging ideas on how civic empowerment could be bolstered through reliable partnerships and sharing a unified vision. To further these efforts, [BCSDN opened a call](#) to support civil society actors in the Balkans to explore the potential for the private sector to play a greater role in strengthening and promoting civic space, gather evidence of current practices and lessons learnt, and identify potential routes for effective collaboration. Over a few months, the three beneficiaries: Albanian Center for Economic Research, European Policy Institute – Skopje (North Macedonia), and Trag Foundation (Serbia), delivered [research papers](#) that were presented in November during the event titled "[CSO and Private Sector Cooperation: Regional Practices within the Global Trends and Threats](#)".

3. TO INCREASE THE COLLABORATION AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE NETWORK WITH AND AMONG THE CORE STAKEHOLDERS

BCSDN continued collaborating with international and global actors in the field, building on its achievements and growth into a prominent network recognized among international CSOs and key institutions for its efforts to promote the development of civil society and the civil society operating environment in the region. Therefore, throughout the year, BCSDN took part in several relevant activities and events.

Within the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), BCSDN, on various occasions, contributed to the strategic solidifying of the global network and presented its efforts for enhancing and better promoting Balkan CSOs' role in development processes. At the [hybrid CPDE All Secretariats Meeting](#) in Paris, focused on the results of effective development cooperation across the regions, BCSDN's Acting Executive Director, Ms. Anja Bosilkova- Antovska, showcased the accomplishments of the European secretariat in the efforts to build more democratic societies. At the [New York CPDE Coordination Committee Meeting](#), held in July, global members' representatives, among which Ms. Bosilkova- Antovska assessed their strategic objectives and achievements of the past two years to better prepare for GPEDC's third High-Level conference, held in December. Apart from reviewing policies, the event also served for partners to advance policy development and advocacy initiatives within CPDE. The 2022 Effective Development Cooperation Summit in Geneva spotlighted how better cooperation strengthens trust and transforms joint actions. The event brought together the Global Partnership for Development Effectiveness – GPEDC stakeholders, including BCSDN's Executive Director, Ms. Biljana Spasovska. In her address, during the "[Effective Multilateral Support at Country Level session](#)", Ms. Spasovska discussed the CSOs' position in development in the context of shrinking civic space and the role of multilateral in strengthening and accommodating the participation of CSOs in the development process in their countries.

By leveraging regional and European events and presenting the Monitoring Matrix findings, throughout the year, we capitalised on multiple opportunities to advocate a

better civil society position and a more enabling environment on regional and European levels. At the [Black Sea NGO Forum in Bucharest](#) in November, Ms. Marija Vishinova Shemova shared network insights on how CSOs can contribute to crisis and peace processes during peace and conflict. The event highlighted the involvement of civil society in crisis management response and humanitarian assistance in the context of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. In September, Biljana Spasovska, BCSDN's Executive Director, joined other CSO representatives and EESC at the [Civil Society High-Level Conference on Youth Policy in the Western Balkans](#), held in Prague. The conference focused on youth accession to bridge conversations about their needs and prioritise issues for action. During her address, Ms. Spasovska highlighted how young people's engagement relies upon an enabling environment that supports CSOs in decision-making processes. At the 4th [Public Participation and Deliberative Democracy Festival](#) in Brussels, On a similar note, Ms. Biljana Spasovska shared inspiring success stories from Regional Civil Society Hub to illustrate the key civil society role in the region, bridging the gap between citizens and institutions.

In December, Ms. Anja Bosilkova-Antovska, the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at BCSDN, joined the online event "[Acting Together after Human Rights Days: Expanding the UN Civic Space Toolbox](#)". The discussion focused on how to protect civil society actors from threats posed by state or business entities while also aiming to ensure a diverse range of voices are part of UN decisions. Ms. Bosilkova- Antovska shared BCSDN's experience on monitoring and reporting on the civic freedom obstructions and shrinking civic space in the Western Balkans, despite existing legal protections.

As part of BCSDN's accountability efforts, Ms. Marija Vishinova Shemova, in November participated at the online [Global Perspectives Conference 2022](#), hosted by the International Civil Society Centre (ICSC). The event focused on how the CS sector is transforming, taking the opportunity to showcase their different initiatives. In her speech, Ms. Vishinova Shemova unpacked the concept of "dynamic accountability" and reflected on BCSDN EO and members' success in developing national civil society codes, while following the best practices of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability. In June, during the Balkan Network for Local Democracy (BNLD) hybrid strategic planning workshop, Ms. Marija Vishinova Shemova, BCSDN's Network and Partnership Coordinator, delivered a [session](#) on developing BNLD Accountability Standards.

4. TO IMPROVE THE FUNCTIONING, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION OF THE NETWORKS

Outreach and Communication

BCSDN web page has remained the main source for resource collecting and sharing, being regularly updated on the Executive Office and members' activities, positions on processes of interest for the region, and capacity-building opportunities. The contents from BCSDN's web page, have been made accessible to the public through various communication channels and disseminated through network's social media channels. Our website was also an integral part of our efforts to respond to the crisis in Ukraine; manifesting as a [letter of solidarity](#) with Ukrainian CSOs and activists, raising our voice for civic freedoms, peace, and democracy.

BCSDN is active on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, communicating with diverse audiences. Most of BCSDN's audience is covered through Facebook, where on average, the network reaches between 90.000 – 120.000 people through the Balkans region, but also from the EU countries. Through LinkedIn, BCSDN is mainly maintaining the information and communication process with its Balkans constituencies, where the majority of BCSDN audience is coming from central European countries. The network has 961 followers and an average reach of around 100. Twitter brings network content closer to 1050 followers, with an average reach of 400.

The E-mail Alerts, one of the signature BCSDN's services, is a bi-weekly digest with over 1500 subscribers, containing relevant information for CSOs and stakeholders, divided into six categories, structured in an easy-read format. Releasing every 1st and 15th of the month, the Email Alerts provide timely information regarding the BCSDN EO, and members' activities and promotion of the products developed. BCSDN concluded 2022 with 499 published issues of this service, entering 2023 with the jubilee 500th edition. **Newsletters** are an additional communications product service, gathering information on the EO activities and members' highlights. There are 300 subscribers to the newsletter, including the main partners, collaborators, and stakeholders relevant to the network. We published two newsletters during the year, which included information on the achievements throughout 2022. The novelty in the communication scope of BCSDN's work would be launching the network's **podcast series**. The series titled "Explaining Western Balkans" premiered in January 2022, and the year has been wrapped up with the publication of the 5th episode.

Throughout the year, BCSDN has been working on establishing an independent website dedicated to the Regional Civil Society Development Hub and upgrading the existing **Monitoring Matrix website**. The development of a separate website for the Regional Hub will allow the collecting and sharing of all information gathered to make it more easily available for all the Regional Hub's partners and the wider CSO public. Such a database will provide valuable everlasting support for many CSOs in their fight to protect the civic space and achieve their missions. It will also promote and enable learning beyond the partners and beneficiaries of the Regional Hub.

The existing Monitoring Matrix website is currently being upgraded to be more user-friendly for visitors and will present the comprehensive MM tool and research findings more visually to engage the audience and capture the visitors' interest, as well as allowing visitors to explore the topics and findings across the region, and able to compare a country's scoring with other countries, or across years.

External Cooperation and Networking

BCSDN has forged strong relationships with civil society networks and institutions worldwide, actively engaging in key initiatives to promote networks' efforts and work, building more resilient democracies in the region. With its research within the Civicus Monitor platform and participation in the Innovation for Change, BCSDN has continued cooperating with CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The Executive Office has been an integral member of the Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA network), and actively engaged with its activities. BCSDN remained committed to advancing worldwide civil society development through its active engagement as European Secretariat for the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE).

BCSDN continued implementing the EU, SIDA, and ADA-funded activities under the three-year programme "Strengthening development partnerships for contributing to more sustainable development in Europe and beyond ", implemented in collaboration with FOND Romania, the coordinator of the Black Sea Region. The programme aims to contribute to the enabling environment of CSOs, improving CSO capacity to engage in development partnerships, and broadening the support base for CSOs and their positions. As of December 2022, BCSDN's Executive Director – Ms. Biljana Spasovska, has been elected to co-chair the Board of the CPDE. BCSDN has also solidified its engagement on issues of importance to the civil sector, both regionally and internationally, by taking a new role of the Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice (DACoP) Coordination team.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RULES AND PROCEDURES

In April 2022, BCSDN held its [Annual Council Meeting](#). The topics discussed included the implementation of new accountability and anti-corruption policies as part of the Regional Civil Society Development Hub's due diligence process, and the need for a revision of the strategic development of the network to respond to current challenges and opportunities, to further strengthen the collaboration among members and the Executive Office with expected contributions from all involved. Following the network's Board and Council recommendations, BCSDN Executive Office explored possibilities for further advancing these objectives toward successful completion during the second half of the year. The board held 3 sessions throughout the year.

Internal Rules and Procedures

As part of BCSDN's efforts to further strengthen its internal development, in 2022, after the Regional Civil Society Development Hub due diligence recommendations, BCSDN Executive Office presented a draft proposal for amendment to the Board Rules of Procedures and BCSDN's Financial Policy. The recommendations, both adopted by the Board were for BCSDN to prepare Minimum standards for the election of Board members and for introducing procedures for handling currency exchange differences.

In regard to the network's commitment to strengthening its accountability, the newly elected BCSDN Code of Conduct Committee, following previous email correspondence, held its first meeting, discussing how to operationalize the BCSDN Complaint mechanism further.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT (IN EUR)

REVENUES		Financial report till 31 st Dec	Financial report till 31 st Dec	Financial report till 31 st Dec	Financial report till 31 st Dec
Budget Lines					
	Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Members	4.708	2.475	250	/
2	BTD	36.923	/	38.862	/
4	Mirror to the State Report on Ac. Reforms (IPA CFCD Macedonia MCIC)	4.124	/	/	/
5	Going the distance (IPA Macedonia MCIC)	25.933	13.045	265	/
6	Rockefeller Brothers Fund	44.208	40.773	33.124	37.877
7	Sida - Global Standard for CSO Accountability	24.999	/	25.022	7.991
8	CSO Sustainability index / FHI360 / USAID	7.180	10.841	6.783	10.345
10	CIVICUS CSM	13.366	24.202	17.584	16.162
12	CPDE	10.735	36.720	1.387	71.792
13	Other revenues (Tax ret., exch. rates, reimburs.)	4	217	7.564	1.610
14	GDSI Limited (EU TACSO 3)	6.590	63.455	38.456	31.520
15	Sida - Regional Hub	652.300	731.086	147.843	562.153
	CARRIED OVER	31.939	583.204	1.127.198	486.341
	TOTAL REVENUES	863.009	1.506.018	1.444.338	1.225.791

EXPENDITURES		Financial Report till 31 st Dec	Financial Report till 31 st Dec	Financial Report till 31 st Dec	Budget Approved	Financial Report till 31 st Dec
Budget lines						
Year		2019	2020	2021	2022	2022
1	OFFICE COSTS (incl. overhead)	15,217	16,258	13,604	14.360	11.692
2	TRAVEL & MEETINGS (incl. network organs)	9,359	5,388	9,914	10.500	1.952
3	COMMUNICATIONS	1,596	2,610	2,956	3.860	2.977
4	STAFF SALARIES	81,818	102,595	132,195	145.240	149.142
5	INFORMATION SERVICES (web, alerts etc.)	2,068	8,805	6,006	11.000	6.168
6	FINANCIAL SERVICES – FEES	6,941	8,317	9,081	4.880	6.529
7	OUTSOURCED SERVICES	/	/	8,271	9.540	9.153
8	DIRECT COSTS ** CARRIED FORWARD	139,304 (606,109)	229,481 (1,131,836)	776,107 (486,204)	742.089	601.825 (436.353)
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES **	256,900 (863,009)	374,182 (1,506,018)	958,134 (1,444,338)	941.469	789.438 (1.225.791)

*Expenditures are presented in cash basis

**The expenditures in brackets are because of the accounting practices in NRM. Accordingly, the revenue has to equal the amount of expenditures of the current year while the rest has to be carried forward for the next year. The brackets are for differentiating the expenditures from the current year from the carried over from the previous year.