



BALKAN  
CIVIL  
SOCIETY  
DEVELOPMENT  
NETWORK

23/07/2010

**One Year On  
The Chance for a Real Partnership:  
Civil Society Facility as a Motor for Support to  
Grounded Democratic Reforms in the Western Balkans**

On 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 (i.e. over one year ago), our network approached the Commission on the need to better include local CSOs in the programming and implementation of the IPA Civil Society Facility with the letter "*The Chance for a Real Partnership: Civil Society Facility as a Motor for Support to Grounded Democratic Reforms in the Western Balkans*". The letter turned into a process of exchange of views and dialogue through series of meetings, workshops, conferences and input of the network experience through the participation in the TACSO Steering/Programming Committee. The latest of such was a brainstorming workshop organized by the DG Enlargement Regional Programmes Unit and TACSO project on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May in Zadar, Croatia to discuss the future of the Facility and especially the TACSO project.

As of 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2010, the Commission announced (through the TACSO website) that there will be no external evaluation to the project. It is not clear whether or when there would be an evaluation of the other two components of the Facility, i.e. P2P and Partnership Action. Taking into consideration that the Facility and especially the TACSO project have raised high hopes amongst the CSOs, but also consequently criticism on its design and implementation, we deem it a *minimum standard* that an external evaluation of the TACSO project, but also of the whole Facility, is conducted before making decision on future of all Facility's components as of 2010 programming year. An external evaluation is the best way to enable input from all stakeholders, for mostly CSOs as the final beneficiaries and expected agents of sustainability and ownership of the Facility. Moreover, such an evaluation should enable objective as possible assessment of the so far results and input for the future direction of the Facility vis-a-vis all components and national vs. multi-beneficiary activities.

Therefore, while remaining fully committed to supporting the Commission's actions to strengthen civil society and civil dialogue in the context of EU enlargement of our countries, our network calls on the Commission to:

- **conduct an overall evaluation of the Facility before making decision on its future programming starting with 2010 programming year; and**
- **we propose a blueprint centred around principles of coherence, ownership, sustainability and (cost-)effectiveness for the future programming and implementation of the Facility** (see attached).

We look forward to continued cooperation in making the Facility an effective supporting mechanism of efforts of local CSOs in the Western Balkan countries.

Sincerely,  
Tanja Hafner Ademi  
Executive Director

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