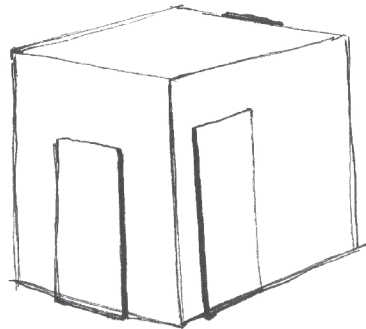
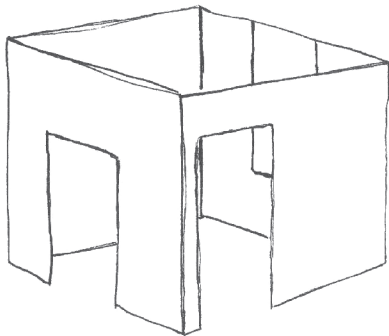


MILKA IVANOVSKA

Ways of Non-financial Gains for CSOs in the Balkans and Turkey



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Author: Milka Ivanovska

Design and preparation: Anja Bosilkova-Antovska

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INTRODUCTION

This policy brief aims to raise awareness among governmental officials and civil society representatives about the significance of non-financial forms of support (NFS) for the development of civil society in the countries from the Balkans and Turkey¹. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have benefit from NFS, particularly in the Western Balkan countries, where long term financial (institutional) support - which otherwise would guarantee higher organizational sustainability - is scarce, as it is provided by very few donors². While financial state support in the region is insufficient³, non-financial forms of public support are widespread in practice, especially at the local level of governance.

In all the countries included in this policy brief, the most common form of NFS is cost-free renting of premises for organizing events and meetings by CSOs. Other forms of NFS for CSOs on both central and local level of government in the countries from the Balkans and Turkey are the following: office equipment (computers, projector, exhibition stands etc.), renting of facilities without financial compensation or under favorable rate, education and training

¹The countries encompassed with this policy brief are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey.

²Ostojic & Fagan (2014), p. 20

³Hadzi Miceva Evans & Hafner Ademi (2013), p. 19

programs for capacity building of CSOs, awards and public acknowledgment for certain projects and practices, partnerships with governments in projects, consultation services, information dissemination, material donations and other forms of in-kind support.

The policy brief is mainly based on secondary data, presented in the Monitoring Matrix country reports for 2013 and 2014⁴, conducted within the framework of the project “Balkan Civil Society Acquis – Strengthening the Advocacy and Monitoring Potential and Capacities of CSOs”. The secondary data describe the state of play with NFS indicators from the Monitoring Matrix for Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development⁵, Standard 4: Non-financial support is available from the state (under area 2: Framework for CSOs’ financial viability and sustainability, sub-area 2.2 State support). The Monitoring Matrix is an advocacy and monitoring tool implemented annually in the countries encompassed with this brief⁶.

⁴The Monitoring Matrix country reports are available at: <http://monitoringmatrix.net/>

⁵Monitoring Matrix for Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development encompasses the main principles and standards which guarantee for a supportive and enabling legal environment for the functioning of CSOs. The Matrix is organized around three areas, each divided by sub-areas. The main areas are: 1. Basic Legal Guarantees of Freedoms; 2. Framework for CSOs’ Financial Viability and Sustainability; 3. Government – CSO Relationship.

⁶The methodology of the tool and the meaning of each indicator, including indicators under Standard 4, are described in the Monitoring Matrix Tool-kit, available at: <http://monitoringmatrix.net/the-toolkit/>

STANDARD 4: **NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE STATE** (AREA 2: FRAMEWORK FOR CSOs' FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY, SUB-AREA 2.2. STATE SUPPORT) IS FULFILLED IF THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS ARE SATISFIED:

LEGISLATION

1. Legislation allows state authorities to allocate non-financial support, such as state property, renting space without financial compensation (time-bound), free training, consultations and other resources, to CSOs
2. The non-financial support is provided under clearly prescribed processes, based on objective criteria and does not privilege any group.

PRACTICE

1. CSOs use non-financial state support.
2. CSOs are treated in an equal or more supportive manner as compared to other actors when providing state non-financial resources.
3. There are no cases of state authorities granting non-financial support only to CSOs which do not criticize its work; or of cases of depriving critical CSOs of support; or otherwise discriminating based on loyalty, political affiliation or other unlawful terms.

(Monitoring Matrix Toolkit, 2013)

Additionally, the brief presents data on NFS for CSOs at the local level. The brief is supported by further analysis of primary documents (strategies, rules of procedure, legal acts, project reports, web page content etc.) and data gathered through tailor-made open questions sent during January 2015 via e-mail to the country experts involved in the Monitoring Matrix exercise (the list of country experts is enclosed in Appendix).

Despite the wide range of examples of NFS, in practice there are cases which show that NFS is not being distributed in a transparent and fair manner by authorities. However, there is not enough available data which proves discriminatory practices by public institutions in the

distribution of NFS. Moreover, there is no data available on whether NFS is sufficiently utilized by CSOs in practice, thus there is a clear need for further in-depth research on this topic by advocates of civil society development (CSDev) in the Balkans and Turkey.

The brief highlights the brighter side of CSOs state support, namely best practices of NFS in order to demonstrate that these are possible and desirable for CSDev and sustainability in the Balkan countries and Turkey. Further on, it maps the state of play of the legal and policy frameworks regulating NFS availability and distribution for civil society in the region. Finally, it focuses on best practices in the region on local and national level, concluding with a set of recommendations.

1

OVERVIEW OF LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS REGULATING NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN THE BALKANS AND TURKEY

While NFS are present in practice, the legal and policy frameworks of the Balkan countries and Turkey do not regulate these practices extensively.

In **ALBANIA**, granting of NFS is specifically regulated only with the Law on Organization and Functioning of Local Governments (Article 8)⁷. This law enables municipalities to rent movable and immovable property to third parties (Article 14), including CSOs. Moreover, there are no policy documents which envision the creation of state-funded resource centers for capacity building of CSOs.

In **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**, the three laws on associations and foundations⁸ in the sections which regulate CSOs' property indicate that NFS may consist of receiving presents from physical and legal persons⁹. The Law on Youth of FBiH¹⁰ obliges the authorities on

⁷ Law on Organization and Functioning of Local Governments, No. 8652/00 is available in English at: <http://www.urban.org/PDF/alb-newlogov.pdf>

⁸ The three laws are: 1) Law on Associations and Foundations BiH (Official Gazette 32/01,63/08,76/11) retrieved at: <http://www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/zakoni/bs/Zakon%20o%20udruzenjima%20i%20fondacijama%20-%2032%20-%2001.pdf>; Currently new separate draft laws are in the process of enactment; 2) Law on Associations and Foundations FBiH (Official Gazette FBiH 45/02); and 3) Law on Associations and Foundations RS (Official Gazette RS 52/01,42/05)

⁹ Ninković-Papić et al. (2014), p. 11

¹⁰ Law on Youth of the Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Official Gazette of FBiH No. 36/10, 16.6.2010, retrieved at:

<http://www.fbihvlada.gov.ba/bosanski/zakoni/2010/zakoni/22hrv.html>

municipal, city and cantonal level to secure minimum measures for the functioning of youth organizations (Article 11) such as: counselling of youth on legal procedures for realization of youth and citizen rights (Article 13, paragraph 5), securing appropriate premises for youth activities and strengthening the capacities of officials who work with youth organizations and initiatives (Article 14, paragraph 1 and 5).

In **CROATIA**, the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012-2016 (Measure 5)¹¹ envisions activities towards establishment of transparent procedures for allocation of state-owned premises and for monitoring of CSOs which are using state-owned premises.

In **KOSOVO**, NFS is neither regulated by the basic law on associations, nor with a policy document. However, the Law on Allocation for Use and Exchange of Immovable Property of Municipality¹² allows municipalities to allocate immovable property to CSOs¹³.

In **MACEDONIA**, NFS is also not regulated with a basic law on associations and foundations or policy documents; however there is a legal basis for allocation of movable and immovable assets. The Government decides to allocate or to entitle right of ownership of movable assets to associations and foundations, with or without financial compensation, in accordance with the Law on Usage and

¹¹ The National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development is available in English at:

http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/National%20Strategy-Civil%20Society-Croatia-2012-2016-eng_final.pdf

¹² Law on Allocation for Use and Exchange of Immovable Property of Municipality, 03/L-226, available in English at: <http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2010-226-eng.pdf>

¹³ Kosovo Monitoring Matrix Report (2013), p. 19

Possession of Assets of the State Organs (Article 55)¹⁴. Furthermore, with the changes of this law in 2013¹⁵, giving of immovable assets to associations and foundations has been enabled, for temporary and permanent usage, with or without financial compensation (Article 3). Also, governmental bodies can create internal bylaws for regulation of NFS allocation¹⁶. According to the Law on Local Self-Government¹⁷ (Article 67), municipality-owned property can be given to other subjects through public auction, in accordance with law.

NFS is not regulated by law in **MONTENEGRO**, however, the Strategy for the Development of NGOs 2014-2016 states that “finding more permanent model of in-kind support for the NGOs should be considered”¹⁸. The Strategy proposes creation of inventory-records of state-owned premises and assets (written-off vehicles, office equipment etc.) which should be available for usage of CSOs through transparent procedure. Article 116 from the Law on Local Self-Government states that the local self-government supports the work of CSOs in accordance with its capacities and will inform CSOs on all questions of their concern¹⁹.

In **SERBIA**, the legal and policy framework for NFS for CSOs²⁰ is provided through the Constitution, the Law on Local Self-government,

¹⁴ Official Gazette of RM, No. 8/05; changes in the Article 20

¹⁵ Official Gazette of RM, No. 137/13

¹⁶ Macedonia Monitoring Matrix Report (2013)

¹⁷ Official Gazette of RM, No. 5/02

¹⁸ The Strategy for Development of Non-governmental Organizations in Montenegro 2014-2016, p. 25, available at: <http://www.osce.org/montenegro/124433>

¹⁹ Law on Local Self-Government (Official Gazette of Republic of Montenegro, No. 42/03, 28/04, 75/05, 13/06 and Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 88/09 and 3/10), retrieved at: <http://www.uom.co.me/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Zakon-o-lokalnoj-samoupravi.pdf>

²⁰ Serbia Monitoring Matrix Report (2013, 2014)

the Law on Local Self-government Financing, Public Property Law²¹, towns'/municipalities' decisions on the use of state-owned property and the national Youth Strategy. However, CSOs are treated in the same manner as other legal entities when competing for NFS. In Serbia, the draft National Strategy for Enabling Environment for CSOs Development includes action measures for creation of a unified register of property of the Republic of Serbia and the units of local self-government, and directions for criteria for allocation of spaces to CSOs by public institutions (Serbia MM Report, 2014). Also, the draft Strategy envisions trainings for civil servants at local level on the principles of transparent allocation of public spaces to CSOs²².

In **TURKEY**, the Law on Relations of Associations and Foundations with Public Institutions²³ does not allow CSOs to use equipment that belongs to state authorities; however some exceptions are specified in the secondary legislation. The Municipality Law²⁴ enables granting of NFS to associations with public benefit status and foundations with tax exemption status. Also, cooperation between municipalities and CSOs is based on protocols.

²¹ Official Gazette RS, No. 72/11, 88/13

²² The draft Strategy and part 7.5 Overview of Action Measures can be accessed here: <http://strategija.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/diskusija/nacionalna-strategija-za-stvaranje-podsticajnog-okruzenja-za-razvoj-civilnog-drustva-u-republici-srbiji/finansijska-odrzivost-organizacija-civilnog-drustva/>

²³ Official Gazette, No. 5072/04, issue 25361, retrieved at:

<http://www.dernekler.gov.tr/en/Statute/Compiled-statute-Laws/5072.aspx>

²⁴ Municipality Law, Official Gazette, No. 5393/05, issue 25874, retrieved at:

http://www.migm.gov.tr/en/Laws/Law5393_Municipality_2010-12-31_EN_rev01.pdf

In summary, basic laws regulating the freedom of association very rarely include provisions which enable granting of non-financial forms of support. Commonly, bylaws and policy documents such as strategies and action plans for the development of civil society include measures for improvement of the availability and distribution of NFS. Finally, laws which regulate the functioning of local governments are the most common legal basis for granting this type of support to CSOs in the countries from the Balkans and Turkey. This is in line with the practice, where municipalities are the main providers of NFS.

2

LACK OF CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR TRANSPARENT ALLOCATION OF NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The most burning issue related to NFS, especially when it comes to granting of movable and immovable property, is the lack of defined legal criteria and procedures for its transparent allocation by national and local authorities. It is not only important that NFS is available, but also that it “is provided under clearly prescribed processes, based on objective criteria and does not privilege any group”²⁵. This is crucial for assuring equal access to NFS for all CSOs and for preventing discriminatory practices against watchdog and critical organizations.

In **ALBANIA**, the Law on Organization and Functioning of Local Governments²⁶ regulates the content of the agreement for allocation of property between third parties and municipalities, but it does not describe the criteria and procedure for allocation of NFS. The final decisions for granting NFS through contractual agreements are enacted by the municipality council.

²⁵ Hadzi Miceva Evans & Hafner- Ademi (2013), p. 34. Standard 4 under Sub-area 2.2: State Support, Area 2: Framework for CSO Financial Viability and Sustainability. For descriptions of indicators see Tool-kit (2013) available at: http://monitoringmatrix.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BCSDN_Monitoring_Matrix-tool-kit.pdf

²⁶ Law on Organization and Functioning of Local Governments, No. 8652/00, is available in English at: <http://www.urban.org/PDF/alb-newlocgov.pdf>. According to the paragraph 2 of the same article, any agreement shall: a) Describe the purpose and functions to be performed; b) Provide for the method by which it shall be performed; c) Describe the level and period of delegation of powers; and d) Set forth respective financial inputs of the local governments and the method of sharing of revenues and other profits from the activity.

In **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**, granting of public immovable property is conducted through decisions for allocation of space with or without financial compensation and on the basis of pre-defined criteria for granting favorable rent. There are cases when the allocation is conducted through an equal procedure for both CSOs and other legal entities, but also there are cases when the public calls address only the needs of specific groups of socially disadvantaged citizens²⁷.

In **CROATIA**, there is a new Regulation on Criteria, Measures and Procedures of Financing and Contracting Programs and Projects of Common Good Implemented by Associations (2015)²⁸ based on Article 33 from the Law on Associations (2014)²⁹. Significantly, Article 1, paragraph 5 of the new Regulation states that all criteria, measures and procedures of public support are applicable on the allocation of NFS as well. Moreover, Croatia is the only country in the region where there is a Decision on Criteria, Measures and Procedures for Allocation of Space in Ownership of the Republic of Croatia to Civil Society Organizations for the Implementation of Programs and Projects of Public Interest (2013)³⁰.

In July 2014, the first integrated register of Croatia's state property for the purpose of allocation to CSOs was introduced publically on the web page of the State Property Management Office. Consequently, the first public contest for allocation of state property to CSOs has been launched for the purpose of implementation of programs and projects

²⁷ Ninković-Papić et al. (2014), p. 11

²⁸ The text of the Regulation in Croatian is available at:

<http://www.uzuvrh.hr/ufokusu.aspx?pageID=36&newsID=3217>

²⁹ Official Gazette, Class: 011-01/14-01/96, No.71-05-03/1-14-2/14, retrieved at:

http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_06_74_1390.html

³⁰ The text of the Decision (2013) in Croatian is available here: <http://www.duudi.hr/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Kriteriji-dodjele-prostora-na-kori%C5%A1tenje-organizacijama-civilnog-dru%C5%A1tva.pdf>

of public interest³¹. The allocation of spaces is administered by a Commission consisting of seven members out of which six are delegated by state institutions and one member is a civil society representative, appointed by the Council for Civil Society Development of the Government of Republic of Croatia (Article 7, 2013). The final decisions on allocation of premises are approved and signed by the president of the State Property Management Office based on a previous proposal by the Commission. The national register of state property does not contain data on the property of local self-governments, and in practice, many of the local authorities do not publish calls for renting property, while selection of candidates is based on arbitrary criteria³².

DECISION ON CRITERIA, MEASURES AND PROCEDURES FOR ALLOCATION OF SPACE IN OWNERSHIP OF REPUBLIC OF CROATIA TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The right to apply for state-owned space (premises) is granted to CSOs registered in the respective register of NGOs; CSOs which promote the values of the constitutional order of Croatia; implement projects and programs of public interest; are active at least two years before the date of application; have transparent financial management practice etc. (see Article 3). The call for allocation of spaces is to be launched at least once on annual level. Article 4 describes in details twelve criteria and measures for scoring and ranking of applicant organizations. An intention for sharing premises with other partners' organizations should be confirmed with statement signed by all the partners, whereas it should be submitted by the organization with the potential to obtain the highest score. There is a

³¹ The public call for allocation of state property to CSOs launched in December 2014. It can be accessed here: <http://www.uzuvrh.hr/vijest.aspx?pageID=1&newsID=3136>

³² Croatia Monitoring Matrix Report (2013)

special form developed for the application procedure. After three years, the CSO recipient can submit a request for extension for additional five years for using the premises, without public call being administered. The CSO recipient of public premises cannot rent the space to third parties. The organizations have the right to request fee-payment release or decreased fee rate because of their initial investments in the space.

There are no clear mechanisms for distribution of NFS on local and national level in **Kosovo**. Only the Law on Allocation for Use and Exchange of Immovable Property of Municipality³³ determines the procedure for allocation and supervision of immovable property, as well as the exchange of municipality's immovable property with immovable property of social enterprises (Article 1 and 2).

In **MONTENEGRO**, the national and local self-governments do not have established criteria for distribution of NFS. However, the procedure for requesting premises for events and meetings is very simple and many of the municipalities provide office space for CSOs. There is no unified procedure and criteria for gaining these premises.

In **MACEDONIA** there is lack of criteria and procedures for transparent allocation of NSF. The only document available is a non-binding Code of Good Practices for Financial Support of Associations and Foundations³⁴, which is a basis for assuring transparent allocation and monitoring of the implementation of financial support, but this document does not regulate allocation of NFS.

³³ Law No.03/L-226, 2010, available in English at:

<http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2010-226-eng.pdf>

³⁴ Official Gazette No. 130, 26.10.2007; The text of the Code (in Macedonian) is available at:

http://www.nvosorobotka.gov.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=2

Clear criteria for distribution of NFS are not available in **SERBIA** either, even though as mentioned earlier, this is one of the action measures included in the draft Strategy for Enabling Environment for CSOs Development. Even after several years of advocacy campaigns led by CSOs in Serbia: “There is no official register of public spaces; there is also no information on their ownership status, as well as the procedures and mechanisms to obtain them”³⁵.

The Municipality Law (Article 75) in **TURKEY**, which is the basis for allocation of NFS, does not specify the forms of NFS or the criteria for obtaining this type of support for associations and foundations³⁶.

In conclusion, even in the cases where there is legal and policy basis for granting NFS, clear criteria and procedures for allocation of NFS are lacking. This means that agreements can be concluded for granting NFS between parties concerned but there are no guarantees for securing transparent, fair, balanced and accountable allocation of public resources to CSOs. The criteria for allocation of financial support should be extended with criteria which apply to NFS and especially when it comes to providing public property and equipment to CSOs. The countries in the Balkans and Turkey should create national and local registers of public property and enact criteria, measures and procedures for transparent allocation of spaces to CSOs.

³⁵ Dimitrijević Mišković (2012), p.10

³⁶ Ekmekci et al. (2013)

3 BEST PRACTICES FROM THE REGION

1. AWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Public acknowledgment for innovative civil society practices or impactful projects is one way in which governments can support the development of civil society. In Croatia there are several national awards which promote youth activism, social innovation and volunteerism. The Croatian National Foundation for Civil Society Development gives the award “Fingerprint heart” for volunteerism in primary and secondary schools, based on students’ proposals for innovative and community serving projects³⁷. Moreover, the National Foundation awards the “Social innovation Id²a” to associations and foundations, for innovative solutions which address some burning societal problem.

The Croatian State Award for volunteering is an annual award established with the Volunteering Act in 2007³⁸ granted by the National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism. The State Award is regulated with a Rulebook on the State Volunteering Award³⁹ and it is awarded every year on International Volunteer Day. The Rulebook stipulates that the candidate can be nominated by both legal and natural persons, and the award is granted for significant contributions

³⁷The text of the public announcement in Croatian can be accessed at:

http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/upload/File/hr/vijesti_i_priopcenja/priopcenja/2014/priopcenje_18_kolovoza.pdf

³⁸Article 24, paragraph 5, Law on Volunteering (Official Gazette, No. 58/07)

³⁹Official Gazette, No. 106/07; The text of the Rulebook in Croatian can be accessed at:

<http://www.propisi.hr/print.php?id=7122>

by individuals or legal entities in voluntary work, and organization of volunteering in accordance with the Law on Volunteering. Even though this award is financial in nature, it has significant non-financial implications in practice.

Similarly, in Macedonia, there is a National Award for Volunteering, established with the Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering (2010-2015), enacted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The award was given in 2012 and 2013 in four categories: for volunteer of the year awarded to individuals, for organizer of volunteering awarded to organizations, for volunteering practice and for media.

2. PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

Another very significant form of NFS support is giving equipment and premises for the necessities of CSOs activities, events and meetings. This practice is particularly widespread on local level of governance.

In Macedonia, the City of Skopje established an NGO Center, located in the premises of the Youth Cultural Center (MKC), an institution managed by the city. The NGO Center is a resource center which provides an office, conference hall, four computers, Internet, projector, printer and other technical equipment for CSOs. One public officer employed in the administration of City of Skopje serves as the coordinator of the Center⁴⁰. Using the facilities is free of charge and

⁴⁰ Strategy of the City of Skopje for Collaboration with Citizen Organizations for the period 2013-2016; The text (in Macedonian) can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/17Mfk11>

available for associations and foundations active on the territory of the City of Skopje, which hold a free of charge membership card. The specific conditions for using the facility are regulated with the Rulebook for Using of Offices and Equipment of the NGO Center Skopje⁴¹. There is also a request form for using the premises and equipment, where the applicant should indicate the reason and timeframe when the facility is needed. The City of Skopje does not own any other spaces that can be allocated to CSOs, thus there is neither a register nor defined procedure for allocation of spaces.

Municipality of Strumica in Macedonia uses the former military administration buildings as offices and space for public events. These are available for free to the CSOs, which can use this space upon request to the Sector for Local Economic Development. Strumica also has a recently opened Center for the Community of the municipality of Strumica, where the offices and utilities are also available to CSOs. This center is a joint project between the municipality of Strumica and the Open Society Foundation in Macedonia. Same centers with the same availability for CSOs exist in the municipality of Struga and Centar. Municipalities in Macedonia can allocate their property to CSOs, however the 'Unresolved Ownership Status' of spaces presents a common problem for gaining the right to use many of the unused public spaces.

In Croatia, IMPACT – European Center for Cross-Sector Partnerships⁴² was opened in 2009 by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development. The center was awarded with the former military barracks "Franko Lisica" in Zadar, by the decision of the Commission

⁴¹ The text of the Rulebook in Macedonian is available at:

<http://www.skopje.gov.mk/images/Image/pravilnik%20-%20skratena%20verzija%20so%20novo%20rabotno%20vreme.pdf>

⁴² Information accessed at: <http://www.impact-center.eu/category/340>

of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Managing State-Owned Properties. The center facilities are used for various types of activities (meetings, debates, conferences etc.) which contribute to cross-sectorial cooperation.

The Human Rights House in Belgrade, Serbia is situated in the premises which were officially granted by the City of Belgrade in 2011⁴³. In order to sign the contract, for which one legal entity was required, five CSOs formed the Union of Associations registered as Human Rights House. The House premises were allocated for permanent use and without financial compensation. The five organizations are using the allocated 519 m² space for offices, library, public events and archive.

Municipality of Bečej in Serbia has allocated more than 150 m² public space for twelve youth organizations for an indefinite period of time. The space contains one multifunctional conference room renovated and fully equipped by the municipality⁴⁴.

2.1. CIVIL SOCIETY STRUGGLE FOR PUBLIC SPACES

CSOs in the region have a significant record of strategic struggle for claiming public spaces for the necessities of civils society initiatives. One important example of such struggle is the campaign “Openly about Public Spaces”, initiated in 2009 by Belgrade-based CSO Civic Initiatives, on the issue of acquiring public spaces (abandoned buildings, devastated public property, old industrial facilities, unused public premises etc.) for the needs of youth and cultural initiatives. The

⁴³ Information accessed at: <http://kucaljudskihprava.rs/o-nama/>

⁴⁴ Civic Initiatives’ report on the project “Openly about Public Spaces”

advocacy campaign focused on: collecting and systematizing information about available public spaces within municipal and town jurisdiction; raising awareness about possibilities for using public spaces among civil society and informal youth groups; facilitating communication and negotiations between civil society initiatives and public institutions. Moreover, Civic Initiatives advocated for the enactment of clear criteria for allocation of unused public spaces to CSOs by the Serbian Government.

YOUTH CENTER “ŠPAJZ” IN KIKINDA, SERBIA

One successful case within the campaign „Openly about Public Spaces“ is the initiative led by a non-formal group of high school students who demanded establishment of a Youth Center in Kikinda, a small town in Serbia. After the initiative gained support by Civic Initiatives, Balkan Community Initiatives Fund, local media and the broader public, the local authorities also recognized the need for such center. Firstly, the establishment of a youth center became a priority measure in the Action Plan for Youth for the period 2011-2015 (March 2011). Secondly, the negotiations with the local authorities in 2012 resulted in an official agreement by which the municipality allocated an unused building for the period of twenty years. The municipality also allocated more than half of the required financial resources necessary for renovation of the building. Civic Initiatives contributed to the strategic development of the initiative and provided advocacy assistance during the negotiation processes with local authorities.

Many civil society actors took active participation in the above-mentioned campaign which resulted in several success stories in the cities/municipalities of Novi Sad, Belgrade, Smederevo, Užice and

Kikinda, presented in the practical handbook “Public Spaces and How to Unlock Them”(2012)⁴⁵. The experiences and lessons from this struggle for re-claiming public spaces in Serbia represent a valuable legacy for other CSOs and governments in the region.

Another example of similar struggle for spaces within the independent cultural sector in Serbia⁴⁶ has been initiated by the Ministry of Space, civic platform interested in actualizing the potential of ‘redundant spaces’ for enhancement of vibrant cultural life in the city. Ministry of Space is focusing on “deserted factories, broken enterprises and unfinished buildings” which mainly have ‘Unresolved Ownership Status’⁴⁷. The struggle of Ministry of Space for restoration of redundant spaces for public benefit encompasses advocacy activities within institutions, but also extra-institutional activism based on citizen engagement and participation.

3. TRAININGS, EDUCATION AND CONSULTATIONS

CSOs in the region can benefit from trainings, education programs and consultation services provided by public institutions. Moreover, public institutions can contribute to dissemination of information which is of interest to CSOs.

⁴⁵ **The Handbook (in Serbian) is available at:** <http://www.gradjanske.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/064-Javni-prostori-i-kako-ih-otkljucati.pdf>

⁴⁶ **Information available at:** <http://www.wavemagazine.net/arhiva/73/culture/culture-spaces-youth-serbia.htm>

⁴⁷ **Information available at:** <http://www.subventive.com/space-is-what-makes-society-recognizable/>

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN CROATIA

The National Foundation for Civil Society Development in Croatia is a public foundation with the basic purpose of promoting and developing civil society. In terms of NFS, the National Foundation provides expert advice and consultations, information and training for all interested CSOs and initiatives. This is also enabled through the National Foundation's cooperation with four regional networks of associations. For the purpose of strengthening the capacities of CSOs through dissemination of expert knowledge, the National Foundation: publishes the professional journal *Civilno društvo* (Civil Society), expert books, handbooks and studies as well as electronic bulletins; supports the building of an expert library and a digital collection of books. The National Foundation moreover supports joint implementation of research projects on civil society development, study visits and exchange of expert knowledge. Finally, it supports establishment of regional and local structures for civil society capacity development.

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) are both implementing capacity building activities for CSOs. SEIO is assisting the programming of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) through the Sectorial Civil Society Organizations (SECO) mechanism⁴⁸. The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society is supporting the work of SECO through the mapping of needs of organizations, provision of trainings in various fields, dissemination of relevant information and coordination of meetings in the framework of

⁴⁸ SECO is a mechanism of civil society-public sector cooperation in the planning and utilization of international development assistance funds. More information available at: http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/publikacije/introducing_seco.pdf

IPA Civil Society Facility etc.⁴⁹ The municipality of Elbasan in Albania provides free expert support for writing-up project proposals for CSOs. These forms of NFS should be extended and strengthened on both national and local level.

4. OTHER MATERIAL AND IN-KIND DONATIONS

There are other material and in-kind forms in which public authorities can support the programs and project activities of CSOs. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a practice of distributing material resources for humanitarian needs⁵⁰. In Macedonia, according to the 2013 e-survey conducted within the first Monitoring Matrix cycle⁵¹, there was one reported case when, on behalf of CSOs demand, the Ministry for Information Society and Administration bought equipment for schools (partners in the CSOs project), in total value of EUR 15.000, which the CSOs received as a material donation.

In the survey conducted by TUSEV in 2014 within the second monitoring cycle, CSOs in Turkey reported having received printing fee and transportation support by municipality's administration.

The municipality of Vlora in Albania supported "Vatra", a local organization that provides social services for victims of human trafficking. Additionally to monthly rental payments and

⁴⁹ Partnership between Public and Civil Society Sector in the Field of Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on International Development Support, Framework program for Cooperation (2014), p.11

⁵⁰ Ninković-Papić et al. (2014), p. 11

⁵¹ Nuredinovska & Ognenovska (2013)

communication costs, the municipality also supports the CSO work by securing a social worker which is a municipality-paid staff. This cooperation is based on a mutual agreement.

4 WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE?

CSOs in the region should:

- Actively advocate and re-claim unused and abandoned public spaces/premises;
- Actively demand and utilize NFS from public authorities;
- Require from local and national governments clear written procedures for transparent allocation of NSF;
- Follow and disseminate information about NFS within their networks.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS should:

- Formulate measures for securing NFS in national policy documents (strategies and action plans);
- Enact clear directions, criteria and procedures for transparent allocation of NFS, and especially for granting state-owned spaces and equipment (immovable and movable property);
- Prepare registers of state-owned immovable property (abandoned buildings, demolished public property, old industrial facilities, unused public premises etc.);
- Create and publish maps where spaces available to CSOs use are clearly marked;
- Cooperate with CSOs in mapping abandoned public spaces and actively contribute to the clarification of their status;
- Establish state awards for volunteering, social innovative projects, youth activism and other supportive practices for civil society development;
- Design and implement free education and training programs for CSOs capacity building;
- Provide other forms of in-kind and material support to CSOs (human resources, free transport and printing etc.);
- Promote publically the possibilities for acquiring NFS through easily accessible and transparent procedures.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS should:

- Continue granting equipment and premises for CSO`s activities;
- Prepare public registers of immovable and movable property available for CSOs;
- Formulate measures for securing NFS in local policy documents regulating cooperation with CSOs;
- Provide material and human resources to CSOs for realization of projects and programs of public interest, especially for CSOs who do not have long-term institutional support and professionally engaged staff;
- Establish resource centers/programs for training, education, consultation for services CSOs capacity building;
- Facilitate information dissemination on CSOs events, sources of funding, partnerships etc. and expert knowledge exchange (through web pages, libraries, handbooks, journals etc.);
- Provide trainings for public administration officers for transparent allocation of NFS;
- Pursue timely resolution of contested spaces between local and central governments;
- Appoint contact person in the municipality for the use of free facilities for CSOs;
- Promote the right of citizens and CSOs to attend municipal council meetings in order to jointly discuss and plan opportunities for NFS.

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APPENDIX

List of Monitoring Matrix country experts who contributed to the policy brief:

Name of country expert	Organization
Sezin Dereci	TUSEV, Turkey
Mirela Buturović	CensuraPlus, Croatia
Klotilda Tavani Kosta	Partners-Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management, Albania
Slavisa Prorok	Center for Promotion of Civil Society (CPCD), Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bojana Selaković	Civic Initiatives, Serbia
Simona Ognenovska	Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Macedonia
Maja Marković	Center for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (CRNVO), Montenegro

