



**ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR
CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN
THE BLACK SEA REGION:
*TOWARDS A REGIONAL STRATEGY
FOR COOPERATION***

FINAL REPORT
2ND NOVEMBER, 2015

TBILISI, GEORGIA



Azerbaijan journalist Khadija Ismayilova jailed in Baku

1 September 2015 | Europe



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Civil Society Is Saving Ukraine From Chaos



By Nicholas Kaufman | Jun. 01 2015 17:53 | Last edited 17:54

The post-Maidan government in / of reforming the country from th / by international creditors are / horizon and the West is d' / While most observers / a silent revolution w / of nongovernment / post Yanukovich / Where the civ / volunteers g / in the ver / One r / to p / w

Following the arrest of Azerbaijan youth activists in a clash over a rally in Baku, supporters clashed with police

There is good news days. P

Armenia protests escalate after police turn on demonstrators

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Germany World Business Tech-TECH ENVIRON

Rally against 'missing billion' Moldova

Protesters have called on the government to investigate m / from banks. The scam has driven down the national cure / standards of living.



Protesters yelled "we want the one billion back" on Sun / general prosecutor and others to resign. / In a fraud that has exposed endemic corruption an / country, \$1 billion (900,000 euros) has disappear / Moldova's gross domestic out put. / Savings Bank, the Social

Azerbaijan Tightens Screws On Civil Society, Independent Media



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Daily claims civil society under surveillance under guise of fight against terrorism

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Cumhuriyet

TÜRKİYE TARİHİNİN HÜKÜMET ELİYLE YAPILAN EN KAPSAMLI FİŞLEME AĞI

GÖZALTINDA

Hükümet bütün kişi ve kurumları Başbakan Davutoğlu imzasını taşıyan ve valiliklere gönderilen gizli genelgeyle izlemeye aldı

CONTENTS

- Analytical framework, methodology, limitations
- State of the enabling environment (EE) in 8 Black Sea countries
- Regional strategy for cooperation proposals
- Q & A, discussion



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

- Monitoring Matrix for Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development (CSDev) + CPDE Framework as a basis
- 4 areas and 10 core dimensions of EE for CSDev
- Both **legal** framework and **practice** aspects covered



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



Basic Legal Guarantees of Freedoms	Freedom of association
	Related freedoms: Freedom of assembly and expression
Framework for CSOs' Financial Viability and Sustainability	Tax/ Fiscal treatment of CSOs and their donors
	State (financial) support
	Service provision
	Volunteering policies
Public institutions/ State– CSO Relationship	Framework and practices for public institutions-CSOs cooperation (Strategy/Compact and Institutions/Mechanisms for Cooperation)
	Involvement in policy and decision-making processes (Access to public information and effective representation and participation in decision making processes)
Donor-CSOs relationship	Donor approaches to CSOs support, funding mechanisms and modalities
	Dialoguing and engagement of CSOs in donor strategies and support implementation



METHODOLOGY

Three months of research and analysis (May-July 2015)

- 1. Desktop research (May)**
- 2. Online survey** from 8th June to 7th July
(45 questions, organized in 6 thematic sections, targeted e-mail invitation a to at least 600 CSOs representatives, 84 valid answers)
- 3. 3 focus groups** (Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine)
- 4. Additional Skype interviews** (Belarus, Russia etc.)
- 5. Stakeholder discussion** (9th September, Brussels)
- 6. Comments on draft report** (Sept-Oct)

Limitations: time, data, language, etc.



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



BASIC LEGAL GUARANTEES OF FREEDOMS

- **Freedom of association** is **not** in line with international standards (Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia)
 - State interference is common and excessive
- Rules for **registration** of CSOs are not applied consistently
- **Foreign funds** registration limitations
- Burdensome financial **reporting requirements**



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



BASIC LEGAL GUARANTEES OF FREEDOMS

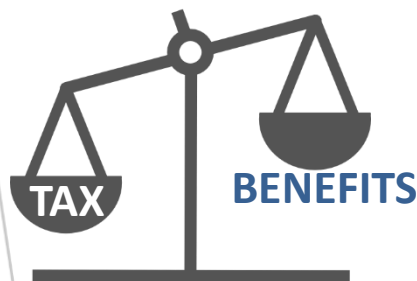
- Legal restrictions on **freedom of peaceful assembly** in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and Turkey
- Disproportionate **use of force** is common
- Serious violations of **human rights**
- **Media** and internet censorship (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and Turkey)



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

TAX/FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

- Absence of systematic **tax/fiscal framework for CSOs and their donors**
- Key **tax exemptions** addressed in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (donations, grants, VAT, income tax)
- Inconsistent **application** of tax/fiscal rules
- **PBO status** is not effective



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- **State (financial) support** in some form is available in all countries
- **Biased**, politicized and does not correspond to the needs of civil society
- Lack of **reliable data** on state funding for CSOs



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Volunteering** is common in practice
- Laws for volunteering have been enacted in Azerbaijan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine
- Georgia- draft law
- Not very stimulating regulatory frameworks
- Definition not in line with international (ILO) standards



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



CSO-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

- Lack of **strategic framework** (except in Moldova and Ukraine)
- **Contact points** for CSOs or Councils for cooperation with CSOs exist
- Lack of **capacity** of officials and CSO representation of the state bodies for cooperation



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



CSO INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY- AND DECISION-MAKING

- Absence of **comprehensive** and **mandatory** legal framework (except in of Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine)
- **Inconsistent** and **partial** implementation
- Involvement in politically **non-sensitive areas**
- Partial **access** to public information/laws/policies



THE STATE OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



DONOR-CSO RELATIONSHIP

- Barriers for **access** to foreign funding:
 - State and administrative requirements
 - Internal capacities of CSOs
- EU and USAID are **key donors**
- Project funding for **HR and watchdog activities**
- CSO report being included in consultations on defining thematic priorities
- Need for **further research** on access, accountability, transparency of foreign funding



REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR COOPERATION

*The Black Sea NGO Forum is perceived as a **neutral** mechanism for **facilitating** regional cooperation and **platform** which will give **voice to the needs** of CSOs from different countries in front of **foreign donors** and **domestic governments'** primarily.*



REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR COOPERATION

- CSOs can potentially cooperate in two different directions:
 - on matters concerning **EE** for civil society development in the region and
 - horizontal cooperation in **specific thematic areas** (funding for research and advocacy)
- Various **challenges** for regional cooperation
 - **external**: security, political-social conditions, EU integration prospect etc.
 - **Internal**: weak CSO capacities, lack of info, funding opportunities, political will to cooperate, legal mechanisms etc.



REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR COOPERATION

- Further **structuring** and **institutionalization** (bodies, committees) on principles of openness, inclusiveness, transparency
- Key roles expected to be performed:
 - **Information-sharing** (website, alerts, CS factsheets)
 - **Advocacy** in foreign donors approach and support, **funding hub** for joint initiatives
 - **Research, exchange** and **facilitation** role on EE issues and thematic network cooperation (hub of hubs)



THANK YOU!

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