



BALKAN CIVIL SOCIETY
DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Online Conference

“Public Participation at the Forefront of the Corona Crisis in the Balkans”

July 13, 2020, 14h CET

Conference link: <https://bit.ly/2WaVYcf>

Livestream link: <https://www.facebook.com/balkancsd.net/>



The challenges with public participation in political-decision making have not been new to the Balkan region, however, they have been further aggravated with the current COVID-19 crisis and possibly increased the mistrust between different actors. The lack of coordination and cooperation between the governments and the civil society in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic is evident, and the civil society participation has suffered even in countries that have noted positive trends before the crisis.

As it is likely that pandemic is not going away soon, and neither are the challenges endured on the public participation, BCSDN and ECNL have come together to organizing an online conference to facilitate a discussion about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the public participation and to explore the ways for promoting participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches in the relief of the crisis.

The conference aims to explore the challenges for public participation in the Balkans to identify what needs to be done to enhance the participation of civil society in the process of responding to the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Participants from the Balkans, speakers from the Open Government Partnership initiative and the Council of Europe will share experience, instruments, best practices, and innovative approaches from global and European level in promoting civil society participation, including the potential for the use of social media as a way for broader engagement of stakeholders.

The conference will explore the new and existing avenues for participation, the key factors for enhancing participatory decision-making and new approaches for advocating and for encouraging participation by broader stakeholders and citizens.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

- 14.00 – 14.10** Welcome and introduction by
BCSDN and ECNL
- 14.10 – 14.30** Keynote speeches by
Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of INGOs at Council of Europe (CoE)
Paul Maassen, Chief, Country Support at Open Government Partnership (OGP)
- 14.30 – 14.45** Reflections and Q&A for Keynote Speakers
(end of livestream)
- 14.45 - 15.15** Breakout sessions: Experience and actions from the region
- 1: Going beyond political will**
The discussion will explore the motivations that drive citizens and public authorities to engage in public participation, and the actions that can be taken for tapping into those motivations.
- 2: Finding new ways for advocacy and exchange**
The discussion will explore ways for promoting public participation and a multi-stakeholder approach by identifying key drivers and factors.
- 15.15 - 15.30** Summary and Conclusions / Next Steps *(Livestream)*