Role of Civil Society in the Process of European Integration

-Policy brief-

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Bibliography
1. **Introduction**

The countries of the Western Balkans are at a different level when it comes to the process of joining the European Union, some of them have been granted the candidate status, while the others still have the status of potential candidates. However, the attitude and opinion of the European Commission is that future of the whole Western Balkans is in the European Union which has been repeated in several documents and declarations. The perspective of integration into the European structures is clear, but it mostly depends on the potential candidate countries themselves. As known, before joining the Union each country which is a candidate for full-fledged membership needs to accept values and standards of the EU at the political level, to adapt its economy, institutions and legal system to the EU standards which are usually much higher than individual national standards of the Western Balkan countries. Accession of the Western Balkans to the EU is conditioned by the ability of these countries to implement political, economic, legal and other reforms which the EU requires. Taking into consideration that preparation of institutions and capacity building, which are necessary for successful implementation of reforms is a very demanding, complex and politically sensitive process the European Union provides great help to the countries of the Western Balkans to achieve stability of the institutions that will guarantee development of democracy, protection of human rights, respect and protection of minorities, existence of the open market economy and other.

The role of the civil society is very important in the whole process, although it is unrarely neglected or completely excluded. Civil society, mostly founded on self-organizing and volunteering, disposes with several mechanisms by which it can achieve particular goals and results in a faster, more effective and cheaper way such as distribution of information, public campaigns, informal educational programs, defining citizens needs, analysis, control and evaluation of effect of particular laws, public policies and strategies, providing different social services and others. For the European Union civil society organizations present a significant, independent resource of information and advice, while they can also function as a control mechanism especially in those fields in which reforms are politically sensitive.

Furthermore, experience of the Eastern European countries proved that support and participation of the civil society is of a key importance for the accession process. The role of the civil society can not be limited only to providing information and distribution of financial resources to final beneficiaries, but it primarily pertains to the active participation of the civil society in defining policies and strategies.

2. **Status of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU Integration Process**

The leading document of the integration strategy of BiH into the EU is the Association and Stabilization Agreement (including the Interim Agreement), which is „external” in the sense that fulfilment of its provisions presents an international obligation of Bosnia and
Herzegovina. Until the end of 2009, the ASA was ratified by 20 countries (out of the EU 27), and until the final ratification, the Interim Agreement is being implemented. The Agreement promotes cooperation in the following fields:

- Free movement of goods;
- Establishment of the effective institutions;
- Development of market economy;
- Reduction of crime and corruption;
- Promotion of the high education reforms;
- Development of democracy, human rights and independent media;
- Improvement of the transportation infrastructure in the region.

The Agreement on the European Partnership, partnership between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU member states is a part of the ASA and its task is to prepare Bosnia and Herzegovina for the higher level of the EU integrations. The Agreement defines short-term and long-term priorities of cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU. The agreement was revised in 2007, and new priorities were adjusted to specific needs of the country in this phase of the EU accession process.

In this regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made a plan for fulfilment of the priorities from the European Partnership, together with deadlines and specific measures. The key priorities within the European Partnership are:

- To implement the strategy of public governance reform from 2006;
- Ensure adequate financing of the ministries and institutions at the state level, and ensure that they are operational and equipped, especially in the sense of the premises and staff;
- Strengthening of the administrative capacities for the implementation of the obligations from the Stabilization and Association Agreement and Interim Agreement;
- Achieve significant progress in creating the joint economic space in Bosnia and Herzegovina that will support free movement of goods, capital, services and persons;
- Reduce structural inflexibility that affects functioning of the labour market, especially labour taxation, level of social contributions and mechanisms for determining salaries with the aim of increasing the contributions and employment rate;
- Take measures for achievement of more functional and sustainable institutional structures and better respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including Agreements on adoption of the changes of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance to the needs;
• The Agreement also defines the framework for the financial aid to the EU. The priorities stated in the Agreement include short-term priorities, for which it is expected to be implemented within one or two years, as well as mid-term priorities, for which it is expected to be implemented within three to four years. The priorities pertain to the adoption of legislation and its application.

Adoption of Acquis Communautaire is the most complex and longest part of the entire process of the EU integrations. The Community law is the matter that changes and it is being supplemented not just by the development of the social relations, but globalization of the economic streams which directly affects the development of the legal system which follows these relations. Each transposition of the provisions of the Community law is subjected to a new transposition and adoption in the way the Community law changes and is being supplemented in the EU.

In the previous period significant results have been achieved, in spite of difficulties (lack of human resources, non-submission of the harmonization instruments that should accompany each legal provision etc.)

Fulfilment of the necessary obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the EU membership requires development of certain institutional capacities of the country and investments in certain fields. Besides investments of its own resources, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a potential candidate country, can get additional financial resources from the other sources for the purpose of the EU integration process, which will be closely looked at in the next chapters.

3. **Attitude of European Commission towards Civil Society Organizations**

In the European Union civil society organizations have a very important role which is recognized and supported by all the EU institutions. The European Commission especially emphasizes the importance of cooperation with CSOs and their representation and participation in the processes that take place at the EU level. Such an approach and role that civil society has in modern democracies is closely related to one of the basic rights of citizens—rights to association with the aim of achieving mutual interests, which is stated in the European Charter on Human Rights, Article 12 and which is respected by all the EU member states. In the last decade cooperation and partnership between the European Commission and CSOs i.e. NGOs has been particularly broadened, including political dialogue and consultations, and implementation of projects and programs in the European Union and partner countries.

Taking into consideration that the European Commission has taken over additional responsibilities in large number of fields which were not under its supervision before, cooperation with CSOs gains even greater importance, since some CSOs and NGOs have been active in those fields for many years and they can offer very useful advice and
guidelines for the Commission. Current work and practice of the Commission clearly demonstrates its readiness and willingness to continue cooperation and improve partnership.

The role of NGOs is of crucial importance since they represent the interest and attitudes of citizens to the EU institutions (such as national minorities, invalids and other) or particular issues (environment protection, trade, education, gender equality and other). It is very important that CSO are able to reach the poorest and most vulnerable groups and to represent them to the EU institutions. In this context, contributions of the CSOs are very evident when it comes to tackling the issues of social exclusion and discrimination, providing humanitarian and development aid and other. Specific expertise and devotion of CSOs to these issues implies that there are crucial partners of the European Commission within and out of the European Union.

Expertise of CSOs can significantly contribute to discussions on policies and offer advice and guidelines on policies drafting. CSOs can implement evaluations on success and other aspects related to certain policies and in that way help to the Commission to improve next policies, create and implement them so that the stated goals are achieved.

In the document entitled „Dialogue of Civil Society Organizations between the EU and Candidate Countries“ from June 2005 the European Commission once again confirmed its attitude that CSOs have the key role in the process of reforms that was being conducted in the candidate and potential candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo). Their work and activities have proved to be one of the most important factors that determine speed and quality of the accession process, as well as creating public support for the EU membership. Besides significant increase of the financial aid that is directed to the projects of civil society within the Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA), the Commission intends to improve consultations with the representatives of the civil society and it works on other measures that will support civil society, such as improvement of coordination among donors.

The European Union has provided aid to wide range of CSOs from those dealing with minority rights protection, including Roma, poverty reduction and social inclusion, environment protection, interethnic relations and human development. In the period 2007-2011 the average annual funds allocation for the Western Balkans was about 800 million EUR, which is the biggest per capita amount that the EU has granted to any region in the world. This support was mostly directed towards three kinds of development projects of civil society:

- Initiatives of local organizations of civil society and capacity building, especially strengthening of the role of civil society;
- Partnerships and networks of CSOs in the EU and candidate and potential candidate countries;
• Programs that enable journalists, young politicians, leaders of trade unions and education workers to get into contact with the EU institutions.

The European Commission states that it is necessary to strengthen dialogue between civil society in the European Union and candidate countries with the aim of exchanging good practices and initiating public discussion on the issues related to enlargement in which CSOs have an important role and can give significant contribution. This initiative is actually continuation of the conclusions of the European Council in 2004 when it was emphasized that accession negotiations with each country imply intensive political and cultural dialogue which inevitably includes civil society. This initiative is based on the experiences of the previous enlargements during which it was proved that citizens were not enough informed on the EU enlargement in the Member States as well as candidate countries. Therefore, the European Commission is trying to correct this failure in the next enlargements through continuous and comprehensive dialogue of the civil society actors from the Member States and candidates, as well as the EU institutions. Three main objectives of the initiative are:

• Improve relations and exchange of experiences between the civil society sectors in the Member States and candidate countries;
• Ensure that the Member States have better knowledge and understanding of the candidate countries with the aim of learning on possible challenges of new enlargements;
• Improve understanding and knowledge of candidate countries on the EU which primarily pertains to the founding values of the EU, internal organization and political functioning.

The document emphasizes that the European Commission states that most of the activities foreseen for the current candidate countries, especially when it comes to the dialogue and cooperation with civil society, will most probably be applied during negotiations with the Western Balkan countries when they receive the candidate status which is also in compliance with the Thessaloniki agenda.

Furthermore, during the conference „Development of Civil Society in South-Eastern Europe: Lets Build Europe Together“ that took place in Brussels in 2008 it was confirmed that constant dialogue between the Commission and CSOs should be established through regular meetings. Besides these meetings it is foreseen that a virtual platform for CSOs will also be established for CSOs from the candidate and potential candidate countries and the EU in order to ensure better participation of civil society and enable exchange of good practices, facilitate finding of partners and developing of projects.

4. The Role of the BiH Civil Society in the EU Integration Process

As it is known, civil sector in BiH played important role during the war when it distributed international humanitarian aid to the final beneficiaries as well as after the war when it gave
great contribution to political and social processes such as return of refugees and displaced persons, political stabilization and reintegration, reconciliation, human rights protection, social inclusion and other. In the context of the European integration the role of civil sector is changing and it will be very much different from the one it has preformed by now. New political circumstances and priorities in BiH as well as in the neighboring countries will assign completely new tasks and obligations to the civil society, which will require greater involvement of the civil society actors in the process of adapting and harmonizing BiH standards to the EU standards on the civil participation in defining public policies, fight against corruption, human rights respect and generally all the other requirements for the EU membership.

In order to respond to these tasks and challenges civil society will have to change its organization and functioning, while, on the other hand, the relation of the state and private sector towards civil sector will have to change i.e. they will have to become equal ad complementary partners in the upcoming changes.

First of all, government representatives need to recognize mechanisms that civil sector disposes in order to solve key social, political and economic issues. Building and sustaining of the three-party partnership –state, private sector and civil society will require establishment of the legal, fiscal and institutional framework that will enable dialogue and cooperation of the three sectors, and, on the other hand, ensure development of the civil society and its maximal contributions in the EU integration process.

Generally speaking the role of civil society in BiH in the process of the European integration can be summarized in the following way:

- Initiating and conducting a public dialogue on joining of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU;
- Involvement and active participation in the process of reforms and monitoring of the achieved results;
- Informing public on the process of the European integration;
- Involvement in the process of preaccession negotiations (through consultations, advocating and lobbying);
- Monitoring progress in fulfilling criteria for obtaining the candidate status;
- Initiating better usage of the preaccession of the EU funds;
- Strengthening of the regional cooperation between the candidate and potential candidate countries, especially countries of the former Yugoslavia.

Speaking of the regional cooperation it should be emphasized that it is one of the most important, but insufficiently recognized issues and conditions for joining the EU. Namely, regional cooperation is a foundation of the creation of the European Union and most of the accomplishments have been achieved due to different ways of cooperation between the European regions. The importance of regional cooperation is best illustrated by the fact that
during previous enlargements regional cooperation was an important and desirable factor, while in the case of the Western Balkans it has become one of the major conditions added to the Copenhagen criteria. The necessity of regional cooperation is particularly emphasized in the Stabilization and Association Agreement. By initialing the SAA, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken over the obligation of active participation and support to regional cooperation, especially in the countries that are also signatories of the SAA. On its hand, the EU also supports regional and cross-border projects and initiatives with the following aim:

- Peace and sustainability building in the Western Balkans and wider;
- Improvement of political and good- neighboring relations;
- Economic and social reconstruction and progress;
- Return of refugees and displaced persons;
- Fight against organized crime and corruption;
- Cooperation on the issues of asylum and illegal migrations;
- Legislation reforms.

Besides the state structures and business sector, the role and contribution of CSOs in solving and implementing the stated issues and processes is very important. Due to their wide field of action, flexibility and ability of relatively fast networking CSOs need to actively participate in the regional programs and projects. Regional networking and cooperation are an important factor in strengthening the role of civil society in the process of the EU integrations. Some of the mutual benefits that can be achieved through regional cooperation and networking are the following:

- Faster adoption of the European standards in different sectors and their more effective implementation;
- Transnational projects that have regional dimension can significantly contribute to strengthening of good governance, since problems are the same or very similar in these countries;
- Through exchange of information, expertise and opinions CSOs can exert positive pressure on the governments to implement or facilitate reforms in the key sectors;
- By identifying issues of mutual interest and creating of concrete working programs these countries –partners can in the best way use the EU programs available in the context of integrations, which are greatly intended for CSOs.

5. **Overview of Donated Funds of the EU for Development of Civil Society**

The European Union finances projects that contribute to development of civil society and promote establishment of constructive dialogue between civil society organizations and authorities at different levels. The aim of these projects is to achieve, as bigger as possible impact, on decision making and policies and to contribute to the greater transparency and
accountability of the government. In the period 1996-2006 the European Commission invested more than 13 million EUR in the projects of civil society development in Bosnia and Herzegovina through programs OBNOVA/ CARDS and EIDHR – European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights.

It is important to mention the KRUZ project (Koalicija uspjeti i raditi zajedno - To work and succeed together), whose aim is to establish a framework for continuous dialogue and cooperation between non-governmental sector and all level of authorities. One of the results of this project is the proposal of the framework for cooperation with the government. In May 2007, the Agreement between the President of the Council of Ministers of BiH and group of about 400 representatives of civil society was signed. Previous CARDS project also helped establishment of the “Reference Groups”, local NGO in Tuzla, which more or less extended its activities to the territory of whole BiH.

Besides this, Delegation of the European Union in BiH has funded different projects aimed at capacity building of CSOs as well as strengthening cooperation with the municipal authorities.

(PERIOD 1996-2006)

6. IPA – Instrument of Preaccession Aid

The preaccession aid for the European integration process implies the financial instrument for the period 2007-2013 called Instrument for Pre-accession Aid (IPA). Bosnia and Herzegovina has signed the Agreement on the Rules of Cooperation with the Commission of
the European Unions, which pertains to the financial aid of the EC to Bosnia and Herzegovina within the implementation through IPA. The framework agreement gives legal, governing and technical framework for the financial aid for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, the framework agreement is a basis for establishing, changing and supplementing the legal framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of its implementation. As a potential candidate country BiH can dispose with the two IPA components:

Support to transition and institutional building and support to participation in cross-border cooperation. After obtaining the candidate status new possibilities for using three other IPA components will be opened: regional development, human resources development and rural development.

Within IPA I component, MIPD defines the priorities for the support of three key fields:

- **Political criteria** (support to the reforms of the public governance including support to customs and taxation department; reforms of the legal system and police; support to the constitutional reforms; media and civil society development, support to the return process, especially in terms of social and economic integration of returnees and support to demining, help to the mine-victims; support to the social and economic inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups, support to the protection of the cultural heritage in the context of „Ljubljana process“)

- **Economic criteria** (economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina through establishing the regulatory capacity and strengthening of the entrepreneurship skills; SME sector development; economic development of the region; improvement of the commerce policy; support to the education reform and development of the national research strategy; support to the active labour market; health system reform; reaction to the impact of the financial and economic crisis through support of economic regulators, SMEs and infrastructure investments).

- **Ability to assume obligations arising from the EU membership** (adjustments to the legal practices of the EU in the fields of internal market, sector policies, justice, freedom and security. The focus of support will be on development of the strategies and policies for establishment of the sector policies and regulatory framework which fulfils the European standards. Support to implementation and strengthening of the sector policies and preparation for the IPA components III, IV and V).

Within IPA I component, MIPD defines support to BiH’s participation in bilateral cross-border programs, multilateral cross-border programs with the EU member states through the Adriatic program, and transnational programs for South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and Mediterranean (MED).

**Table 1. Indicative financial allocations for IPA components in the period 2009-2011.**
### Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a beneficiary country of the pre-accession aid, is obliged to ensure its own co-funding. The amounts of co-funding depend on the individual IPA components and on the type of the project contract. Financial support is granted in the form of irreversible funds or irreversible funds combined with credit of the international financial institutions. It should also be emphasized that after receiving the candidate status, the aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina will be based on the priorities determined in the Accession Partnership, national program for the adoption of Acquis Communautaire and negotiations framework.

#### 7. Difficulties Related to IPA

Since the beginning IPA became the synonym for the development of the Western Balkans. However, there are certain difficulties when it comes to IPA funding. The main problem for the recipient countries is their capacity to absorb these funds. Although the EU annually allocates certain amount of money to each country, this money can be used only if the projects are of a high quality. However, potential beneficiaries very often lack capacities to propose good quality and innovative projects. This lack is especially emphasized at the regional and local level where a great portion of the IPA funds should be directed. Very often neither regional and local government, nor civil society organizations are capable to meet the project criteria which are required for IPA funding. Preparation of good application for funding an EU project requires advanced administrative capacities and great experience. The project application itself is very often 20-50 pages long together with a manual which is about 80 pages. This open great opportunities and market for foreign consultants. The state authorities and CSOs very often choose to work with foreign consultancies due to their experience which is a great guarantee that a project will be well-written and that the European Commission will approve funding for its implementation. It is preferred that a part of the money is spent on consultancies and that total implementation budget is reduced in that way, instead of having the project assessed poor and not receiving the IPA funding. In order to change such a situation, attention needs to be paid that civil servants and CSO staff receives training and adopt skills for effective usage and management of the preaccession aid. Up to now, many trainings have been organized, but...
according to the experts evaluation they have been too general and not adapted to the needs of the target population.

Furthermore, application for IPA funding includes a lot of bureaucracy, even simple projects often require complicated administration usually in English. This is very demanding and stressful for smaller applicants such as NGOs, farmers associations and smaller municipalities and it is very often the reason that they choose not to apply for funding. Many IPA projects are therefore inaccessible to regional and local partners. Even when the project are directed towards civil society only a small number of CSOs is able to meet high technical and financial criteria to compete with the partners in consortiums for technical assistance, and usually only as partners not leaders. These problems can not be solved through trainings and capacity building, but they will require advocacy by the CSOs and state structures for the introduction of changes that will facilitate access to IPA financing. Eastern European countries, which are not the EU member states, lost great amounts because they were not ready to require changes in the application procedures. The Western Balkan countries should seriously take this experience into account and start acting immediately in order not to repeat the same mistake.

8. **Recommendations**

The basic recommendation for strengthening the role of civil society in the process of European integration is based on the need of promoting and adopting three-party partnership and cooperation between authorities and state institutions, civil society and the European Union i.e. Delegation of the European Commission in the Process of Stabilization and Association of BiH to the EU, as well as better programming and coordinating of the preaccession aid. In this context it is necessary to say that in Bosnia and Herzegovina important issues such as constitutional reform, reform of the legislation system, education system and other, are mostly discussed and decided on without participation of CSOs, academic community and citizens. Therefore, it needs to be ensured that civil society is continuously and actively involved in the process of the European integration and to monitor the achieved results.

Recommendations on the integration process are based on the three-party approach and they can be divided in the following groups:

1. **Recommendations for civil society organizations**;
2. **Recommendations for the government representatives and state institutions**;
3. **Recommendations for the Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

**8.1. Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations**
1. It is recommended that CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina take active participation in
the process of building dialogue and cooperation with the BiH authorities through
implementation and further development of the Agreement on Intersectoral
Cooperation at all the levels of authorities, especially through application and
development of the Agreement on Cooperation between Council of Ministers and
Non-governmental Sector in BiH (Agreement);
2. CSOs need to work on strengthening cooperation through sectoral networking and
forming of the coalitions with the aim of better representation and advocacy of
mutual interests to donors and authorities;
3. CSOs need to work on forming networks that will not be of a general purpose and
focused on strengthening civil society, but networks that will be action orientated on
solving particular issues;
4. CSOs need to revise the founding values of civil society and their statutory activities,
to work on the promotion and support to tolerance, solidarity and mutual respect in
the society;
5. With the aim of improving professionalization and quality of its services it is
necessary that all CSOs introduce and promote the quality management system for
CSOs;
6. It is necessary that CSOs work on strengthening credibility, accountability and
transparency;
7. It is advised that NGOs and media cooperate much more, and that NGOs are more
present in media which would enable articulation of independent attitudes and
opinions on the key political, social, economic and other issues and processes in BiH;
8. CSOs should especially increase their contribution to development of the social
capital, internal reintegration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and creating cohesion as
one of the important preconditions for the EU membership;
9. CSOs need to work actively on establishing partnership with the government
representatives which will enable greater involvement of the civil society in all the
phases of creating state policies, strategies and laws;
10. Speaking of the advocacy initiatives, it is necessary that CSOs use more the
possibilities of the Rules for Consultations for Drafting Legal Regulations of the
Council of Ministers of BiH;
11. CSOs should work together on advocating changes of the application procedures for
the EU fund and making them more simple;
12. CSOs need to work more, individually or together, on organizing or receiving specific
training for usage and management of the IPA funds,
13. It is necessary that CSOs initiate creating of the independent reports on the progress
of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU integration process;
14. CSOs needs to get involved in monitoring and implementation of the Action plan of
the Council of Ministers of BiH for implementing Strategy for Introduction of
Decentralized System of the EU Aid Management
15. It is recommended that CSOs work on establishment of the clear and transparent mechanisms for allocation of the funds for the activities of CSOs from the budgetary resources, EU funds and other donor resources;

16. Networking and greater cooperation among research and advocacy organizations (think-tanks, institutes) is also recommended with the aim of creating and implementing joint projects on creating, monitoring and evaluating results of the public policies;

8.2. Recommendations for the Government Representatives and State Institutions

1. Government representatives should practically confirm their declarative will and readiness for establishment and development of the dialogue and cooperation with CSOs based on the principles of the equal partnership through consistent implementation of the Agreement;

2. It is recommended that institutional mechanisms for cooperation with civil society are established i.e. Office for Cooperation with CSOs and Council for Development of Civil Society within Council of Ministers;

3. It is necessary to support technical and institutional capacity building of the government institutions and representatives of the civil society that are involved in the implementation of the Agreement through different educational programs for CSOs as well as civil servants;

4. It is very important that government enables engagement of the CSOs in the process of creating public policies at all the levels of the government with the aim of information exchange and consultations (through organizing round tables, workshops, focus groups, forums etc.) as well as thorough nominating representatives of CSOs in temporary and permanent working bodies, commissions, boards within executive and legislative state bodies;

5. Regarding implementation of the Agreement it is necessary to establish mechanisms for transparent financing of the program and projects of CSOs from the budgetary resources through adopting Good Practice Code for Financing;

6. With the aim of creating simulative legal and fiscal environment for development and work of civil society it is necessary to adapt regulations that would introduce tax, fiscal and other subventions for the work of CSOs;

7. Participate in and support activities in the existing networks and coalitions and initiate creation of the new ones in order to ensure better dialogue, more effective coordination and cooperation of the competent state bodies and institutions with CSOs;

8. Enable establishment of the effective and inclusive mechanisms for the implementation of consultations with CSOs regarding the most important reform issues on the Stabilization and Association Process, based on the good practices of other countries;
9. Ensure effective mechanisms for the application, monitoring and evaluation of the Rules for Consultations for Drafting Legal Regulations of the Council of Minters;
10. It is necessary to conduct a campaign through which citizens and CSOs would be informed and motivated to get more actively involved in the process of public consultations in the filed of public policies;
11. Ensure that CSOs have better access to the resources from the European funds and other donor resources in the cases when co-financing is required through establishing adequate mechanisms of financial aid (such as SIF in BiH for social inclusion of vulnerable groups)

8.3 Recommendations for the Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. Delegation of the EU in BiH as well as other institutions should incent BiH authorities to regularly report on the application of the principle of dialogue and partnership with CSOs in the Association and Stabilization Process, as well as creating guidelines for the consultations with CSOs in all the phases of drafting, applying, monitoring and evaluating reform strategies, programs and policies;
2. The Delegation and other EU institutions should add the obligation of the respect and practical application of the principle of dialogue and partnership between government and authorities to bilateral agreements, as one of the most important factors of the EU Enlargement Strategy;
3. Delegation of the EU should also adopt its strategy on communication with CSOs that would precisely state the ways for exchange of information on the issues related to the integration process;
4. It is recommended that the principle of three-party partnership and cooperation between CSOs, BiH authorities and the EU is promoted through programing, implementation and management of program and projects;
5. Delegation of the EU and Directorate for the European Integration should select CSOs for participation in different consultations and other ways of cooperation based on their competences, experiences and principle of quality management for CSOs;
6. It is recommended that the EU institutions revise their current procedures and rules for applying to programs and projects funded by the EU, as well as for their implementation and to make them more understandable, accessible and flexible;
7. It is recommended that Delegation of the EU in BiH and other institutions coordinate programs and projects for civil society development with other donors, to take into consideration their complementarity, to promote and require accountability principle from the local actors, as well as transparency and sustainability of the projects;
8. It is recommended that IPA supports establishment and development of regional sectoral organizations and regional networking;
9. It is recommended that Delegation of the EU in BiH and other institutions consider the possibility of introducing different models of support and assistance to CSOs that will be more suitable to their level of development and needs;

10. It is recommended that Delegation of the EU in BiH and other institutions support development of the existing and creating of new models and ways of cooperation and consultations between CSOs and government representatives on adopting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of strategies, policies and laws.

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