

The overall goal of the project was to provide support to the Government, in the development and implementation of coherent long-term policy and strategy which will aid the Government in cooperation with the civil society.

The objective of the project was creation of the Government's Strategy for cooperation with the civil sector.

The target group of the project were: civil society organizations, the Government of Republic of Macedonia / Secretariat General / Unit for Cooperation with the Non-Governmental Organizations, as well as other state administration bodies.

In the framework of the project, the following activities were undertaken:

- Preparation of a concept for the Strategy (March – May). The concept for the Strategy was prepared by the junior local and international expert on civil society, the staff of the Unit for Cooperation with the Non-Governmental Organizations and other relevant officials in the Government of Republic of Macedonia. On the basis of these analyses, a concept for the Strategy was prepared, which was discussed and approved by the Working Group of the project. On May 24th the Governing Committee approved the concept, whereas on June 1st it was also adopted by the Government of Republic of Macedonia.
- Consultations with the civil society sector (June – October). In order to achieve greater level of participation and involvement of the civil society organizations, in preparation of the Strategy, 5 consultative meetings were held. The first meeting was held in Skopje, and in four cities in the country; Struga, Gostivar, Stip and Strumica. At the meetings the larger inhabited areas were encompassed and total of 212 representatives from the civil society organizations participated.
- Preparation of a Draft Strategy (October – December). The Draft Strategy was presented to the members of the Working Group. Before the meeting of the Governing Committee took place, the final public debate was convened with participation of civil society organizations and media, wherein more than 140 participants were present. At the meeting held on December 14th the Governing Committee approved the Draft Strategy for cooperation with the civil society sector. The adoption by the Government was expected at a meeting on December 26th.

The primary goal of the Strategy is improvement of the cooperation of the Government and line ministries with the civil society sector. It should serve as overall guiding framework for a

well-thought state policy of cooperation and support to the civil society sector, reflecting priorities, principles and proposed approaches. Moreover, the Strategy enables appropriate room for defining concrete policies, priorities and modalities depending on the context of the stakeholders and the needs of the community.

The strategy offers framework, mechanisms and policies which will:

- strengthen and improve the cooperation of the Government with the civil society organizations and foundations;
- enable greater inclusion and influence of the citizens, through their associations and foundations at the institutional decision making on central level and creation of policy, through using their experience in the decision making
- improve the conditions for further strengthening and development of associations of citizens and foundations, through creation of favourable systemic and institutional surrounding

- improve the systemic conditions for provision of sustainable development of the civil society sector;
- create normative and institutional preconditions for realization of the EU standards in this area;
- improve the access to public information;
- take into consideration the achieved degree of development of the civil society sector in Republic of Macedonia, as well as policies, international documents and strategies, comparative experience and best practices from the European countries in the future determination of the domestic priorities.

The Draft Strategy contains an Action Plan with set measures and activities, as well as time period and responsible institutions for implementation of the activities.