

The Balkan region, (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia Montenegro and Macedonia including Kosovo) has gone through a transition period from Communist, monopartisan into democratic and pluralistic political system. The frequent change of the political elites and increased apathy of the voters disable the strengthening of the democracy in the region. But, primary political goal of all governments is integration in the Euro-Atlantic alliances.

The civil society dialogue (civil dialogue) is defined in its broader context as “structured practices of dialogue among the national, EU, international institutions and civil society organizations (CSO)”. The region is experienced in this type of activities on national level, mostly through attempts for definition of relations, legal framework and cooperation between the governing institutions (on central and local level) and the civil society organizations. But, these activities “are not yet on the necessary practical level to achieve the real results and cooperation”. In the context of approximation of the countries from the region towards EU membership, the civil dialogue is a kind of (unwritten) obligation of the governments and their need to establish cooperation with the civil society organizations (and other actors of the civil society) in the process of accession, with a purpose “to enhance, deepen and maintain the dialogue between the candidate countries and EU members states as well as EU institutions”. Although there are individual positive practices and experiences, the cooperation with the governing institutions should be improved. The nature of this cooperation is long-term as it allows the civil society organizations to be involved in the adoption of the priority decisions for the development of the country. On EU level this means that the civil society organizations will provide expertise in the creation and implementation of EU policies in the scope of their work.

The project purpose was to improve the dissemination of information, to develop skills and exchange experience on influencing the public policies, decision making and development of structures for civil dialogue.

The target group is consisted of the BCSDN members (ACSF, DA – Albania, MCIC – Macedonia, PF, WAD – Bulgaria, NIT, EOS – Croatia, EHO – Serbia, AIDRom, OAR – Romania, WAWS – Kosovo, CRNVO – Montenegro) and other relevant civil society organizations/ networks.

The project included two activities. The first one was organization of civil dialogue training. This training was based on the experience and skills of the Slovenian organizations in establishing the civil dialogue (in terms of legal framework and practice). The relevant experience from the

region was transferred through the case studies developed by the participants. The training was realized in two phases. The training in Novi Sad was for the participants from Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia, while the training in Tirana for those from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. Total of 41 participants attended the three-day training sessions. The participants were happy with the experience they gained from the Slovenian model, although it is not applicable in all countries.

The second activity of the project was the preparation of the 5th edition of the Balkan Civil Practices: Civil Dialogue Guide. The Guide is based on the information and skilled gained through the civil dialogue training, but also their upgrading. The first part is focused on establishing a framework for the civil dialogue and the current situation in Slovenia. The second part gave overview of the situation in the countries in the region. The text was prepared by CVNOS and the Guide was printed in English and the three local languages (Albanian, Serbian and Macedonia). The average number of pages is 140. The English edition was published in 100 copies, while the local editions in 150 copies each or 550 in total. All editions have an electronic version, available on BSCDN website.

The Civil Society Training took place from July 4 – 6 in Novi Sad (Serbia) and from July 11 – 13 in Tirana (Albania). The publication was prepared in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and edited and printed in Skopje. The distribution was from/in Skopje. Novi Sad and Tirana.

The project improved the dissemination of information, developed skills and exchanged experience on influencing the public policies, decision making and development of structures for civil dialogue.