

POLICY REPORT



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Follow up – Macedonia and IPA Funds – guidelines for Civil Society Organizations & expectations for the future



Abbreviations

CBC – cross-border cooperation

CFCD – Central Financing and Contracting Department

CSD – Civil Society Dialogue

CSF – Civil Society Facility

CSO – civil society organization

EIDHR – European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession

NPAA – National Programme for the adoption of the acquis

P2P – People2People Programme

PfA – Partnership for Actions Programme

SEA – Secretariat for European Affairs

TACSO – Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organizations

ToR – Terms of Reference

WB – Western Balkans

Introduction

In 2009, Analytica published the report *Macedonia's lagging behind in efficient usage of EU funds (IPA, Framework Programmes)*. In 2009 the country was still just getting to know all the complex procedures and labyrinths that the EU funding represents. The conclusion was that: "...the overall feeling is that compared to Croatia and Turkey, Macedonia is lagging behind in terms of IPA usage. Institutional capacity has been a persistent problem and there have not been sufficient trainings of the private sector in the past years either, which adds to the situation Macedonia is in."¹

It can be said that several important occurrences happened since the IPA funding was established in 2007. Even though Macedonia's integration is in a limbo at the moment due to the Greek veto over the name dispute, the funds flow each year towards the capacity building of the county and the state, private and civil sectors. The process of the reforms does not stop and the better the country is prepared for the negotiation process the smoother it will run once it starts. Therefore the country should strive to full usage of the numerous EU funds that are open for the Macedonia's institutions, private and civil sector.

This report will try to answer the questions that appeared in the period from the publication of the last report up until now. They mainly deal with the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the usage and monitoring of the spending of EU/IPA funds. This has come up as a hot topic due to the shrinking of the other available funds in the civic sphere or acting and due to the low usage or smaller distribution of the EU funds to larger number of CSOs throughout the country. Therefore this report will firstly give a short explanation of the current state of the IPA funding for CSOs in Macedonia and then it will try to answer the questions about the alternatives CSOs can and should pursue in order to expand their possibilities of funding. Following that, at the end the report will present some of the much needed recommendations for the CSOs and the state institutions regarding the EU's funding opportunities.

1. Available EU funding in Macedonia.

Starting with the official data, the latest Progress Report on Macedonia states the following about the usage of the EU/IPA funds in the country:

The Multi Annual Indicative Planning Document for 2011-13 provides for a total EU contribution of €305 million and adopts a sector based approach. In addition, the country continues to benefit from various regional and horizontal programmes. Cross border cooperation is also used to promote capacity building and dialogue between the local and regional authorities of neighbouring countries, namely Bulgaria,

¹ Sonja Risteska, Macedonia's Lagging Behind in Efficient Usage of EU Funds (IPA, Framework Programmes) – Analytica's Analysis <http://www.analyticamk.org/files/ReportNo34.pdf>, page 8.

Greece, Albania and Kosovo. Since 2007 the Commission has committed an amount of over €288 million for projects to be implemented in the country, including 92 million in 2010. The EU financial assistance portfolio managed by the EU Delegation in Skopje amounts to € 115 million. By June 2011, 85% of this total had been contracted and more than 60% disbursed....*Civil society has received extensive financial support from the EU under the IPA Society Facility and national programmes, as well as through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.* Aid objectives include the wider involvement of civil society in decision making and an increased capacity of independent civil society organisations. The national programmes currently being implemented provide significant support to improve the development and sustainability of civil society organisations and further capacity building of the government unit for NGO cooperation. Under DIS, civil society can now start to be involved in the monitoring of the overall implementation of EU aid.²

Missing key feature from the above mentioned is the exact sum that the civil society gets on an annual level from the EU (all EU programmes not only from the IPA), and how is that dispersed throughout the civil sector and the country itself (what regions of the country get more assistance, which regions lag behind, how repetitive are the organizations that win the tenders etc). The EU Delegation in Skopje did not respond to the request for an interview where the topic of this report would have been discussed. What was available as data were the lists of who got funding for what project in the previous years through the EIDHR and IPA funding schemes.

The report will discuss those findings later. Next topic of discussion will be the possibilities that the EU offers to the CSOs in the country which fall under the **Civil Society Dialogue (CSD)**³.

1.1 Funding possibilities specifically intended for CSOs⁴

Under the CSD there are two components under which the organizations from Macedonia can apply with their project ideas.

- I. One of those is the Civil Society Facility (CSF) which includes the following programmes:
 - IPA Multi-Beneficiary Programme

In short this programme complements the IPA national programme, focusing on multi-country cooperation approach and giving the possibility to civil society organizations to learn from each other's experience. The programme...comprises three fields of activities: support for local civil society initiatives

² European Commission, the FYR Macedonia Progress Report, Brussels 12.10.2011, pages 4 and 5.

³ CSD represents a tool created by the EC in order to get involved in helping the enlargement and development of the civil society in the candidate countries.

⁴ Not to create any confusion these funds are also available for the other countries (candidates for EU membership, possible candidates) as well.

and capacity building, reinforcing the role of civil society in the candidate and potential candidate countries; People-to-People (P2P) programmes supporting visits to EU institutions and bodies to exchange experience, know-how and good practice between Beneficiary and EU civil society organizations (CSOs); Partnership Actions carried out between Beneficiary and EU CSOs leading to a transfer of knowledge and creation or strengthening of networks.⁵

- People2People (P2P) Programme

As mentioned above the P2P programme supports study visits of CSOs from Macedonia in the EU institutions, organizations, think-tanks etc. in order to gain knowledge and experience with the financial assistance of the EU funds. This helps the CSOs from countries like Macedonia to accomplish promotions and conduct networking that if left on their own it might never happen due to the limited funds the organizations have. The procedure for applying is:

The candidate from the organization that wishes to apply needs to send his/her CV and a letter of interest to the following contact address: delegation-fyrmacedonia-P2P@eeas.europa.eu

The letter (in English) should be in the format of an attachment to the email and should include:

1. In subject: the title of the event;
2. Contact details including the name of the CSO, name of the candidate, position, e-mail, phone, fax and postal address;
3. Brief information about the position of the candidate and his/her activities within the CSO;
4. Short description on the relevance of the CSO's work relevant to the subject of the event;
5. The expectations / possible added value for the candidate and for the CSO represented.⁶

The TACSO project in Macedonia also helps and assists the organizations that want to conduct this type of study visits by organizing events where CSOs that have already been to these visits share their experiences and where more information about the whole programme and application procedure can be found. The point for contact at TACSO Macedonia is: Valentina Atanasovska [valentina.atanasovska@tacso.org].

- IPA National Programme

Last but not least is the separate component of IPA which is exclusively intended for CSOs. It forms a part of the CSF with the Commission Communication on Western Balkans that focuses on creating conditions that will encourage the further growth and development of civil society organizations... In

⁵ IPA Multi-Beneficiary Programme

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/eu_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/civil_society_dialogue/csf/ipa_mp/index_en.htm, last visited on 11.11.2011.

⁶ People2People (P2P) Programme

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/eu_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/civil_society_dialogue/csf/p2p/index_en.htm last visited on 11.11.2011.

February 2011 the first generation of fourteen IPA grant contracts were signed with different civil society organizations. Similar call for proposals for the civil society with a trend of increasing financial assistance will follow in the coming period under the IPA national programmes (2010, 2011, etc). The grants are multi-annual and apart from the Delegation's web page (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/index_en.htm), these calls can be found on the web page of the Unit for Cooperation with the civil society (www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk) that under the Decentralized Implementation Systems (DIS) is responsible for the projects calls and their proper implementation and monitoring system.

II. The other component of CSD is called EIDHR – European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. This programme has been present in the country even before the introduction of IPA in 2007⁷. The point behind it is that:

“The European Union, through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human rights (EIDHR) supports the human rights defenders, against repression and the arbitrary exercise of power, aiming to promote and support human rights and democracy worldwide. It also aims at reinforcing their activities in documenting violations and supports the United Nations Special Procedures.”⁸

The legal basis for this initiative under the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013, is the Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006, establishing a self-standing financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide. The specific objectives are identified in accordance with the EIDHR Strategy Paper 2007-2010, available on the Internet at the following address: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/eidhr/documents/eidhr-strategy-paper-2007.en.pdf>. All calls that fall under EIDHR are also published on the web page of the Delegation of the European Union in Macedonia: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/funding_opportunities/grants/index_en.htm

⁷ It was created in 2006.

⁸ European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/eu_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/civil_society_dialogue/eihrd/index_en.htm

2. The views of Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organizations (TACSO) in Macedonia⁹

TACSO is quite a unique project – technical support for the CSOs in the Western Balkans (WB) and Turkey in order to strengthen CSOs capacity and their role in participative democracy. Among other specific objectives the project aims also to boost the capacities of the CSOs for using the EU Funds (does not necessarily focus on IPA funding). What they do regarding this objective – information sessions, distribution of current calls, plus training courses and in addition networking between the civil societies in the region. They have quite extensive database of CSOs in Macedonia and the region.¹⁰

What is their experience with Macedonian CSOs and the usage of EU Funds:

Last year they had a set of different activities regarding EU funding for CSOs, including two trainings specifically for the IPA funds – it turned out to be more as information meetings for exploring EU funding possibilities for CSOs and writing project proposals. The overall conclusion is that Macedonian organizations still know very little about how to use the available funds.

Another noticed issue is the problem with the available funds' data. It is not consolidated in one place – that is why it is important to be in TACSO's database, they send mails regularly about the calls for the more important funds (when the calls open).

Another problem is the insufficient level of knowledge of the English among many who work in CSOs in Macedonia which hinders the organizations in applying for funds. The conclusion is that we lack the most basic capacities – language skills, project writing skills. The levels of regional and national cooperation are also not very much for applauding.

Why is this case? The small budgets of the majority of the organizations (1600 EUR on average) influence significantly how successful are CSOs in applying for EU funds. Typically the threshold for applying set by the EU is high for Macedonian CSOs and grass-root organizations have problems to demonstrate adequate financial management capacities to manage EU grants. Due to the tight budgets the organizations usually have limited possibilities to engage highly qualified staff which leads to low level of knowing English and low level of project writing experience which then leads to the low level of applying.

What is TACSO doing next in order to help eradicate the causes for low level of project proposals?

TACSO started the 2nd phase of its activities. This time there will be big emphasis on networking between the CSOs in Macedonia. The idea is to connect the smaller organizations from the country with the bigger

⁹ Interview with Suncica Szardovska TACSO Project Macedonia conducted on the 19th of October 2011. The views expressed do not represent the official position of the TACSO project and SIPU International and cannot be regarded as reflecting the EU position. Webpage: http://www.tacso.org/Default.aspx?langTag=mk-MK&template_id=69&pageIndex=1

¹⁰ Analytica's Profile in TACSO's database: http://www.tacso.org/cso-db-res/reg/CSODetailData.aspx?PROFILE_ID=%20215

ones which already get EU funds on regular basis for transferring the know-how, training the people working in the smaller CSOs and cooperating together jointly on EU projects in the future. Smaller CSOs will send people for traineeship/internship to the bigger CSOs and all this is going to be assisted by TACSO.

Ms. Sazdovska comment on the usage of IPA funding by Macedonian CSOs – it is too early to judge the usage of the IPA funds intended for the CSOs. EIDHR for instance is quite a successful programme on the other hand. She said there should be bigger awareness about the Civil Society Facility of the EU and its components: IPA Multi-beneficiary Programme, the People2People Programme; TACSO and Partnership Actions PA (and example of how we fare in the PA Programme: there have been only 2 leading project proposals from Macedonian CSOs in the last 3 PA calls, which is less than satisfactory).

3. Profile of CSOs that have won EU funds 2007-2009.

This part of the paper will illustrate how in period of two years, Macedonian CSOs from around the country have performed in getting grants from the EU under two different schemes: IPA (Cross-Border Cooperation and Civil Society) and EIDHR.

Under EIDHR from 2007 to 2009 and IPA 2007-2009 forty-five CSOs won grants for their project ideas. The exact number of applications is unknown. Out of those 45 organizations, four organizations have won grants consecutively year after a year. For instance the Center for Research and Policy Making (Centar za Istrazivanje i Kreriranje na Politiki Skopje) has won projects under EIDHR 2007 and EIDHR 2008. Furthermore the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (Makedonski Centar za Megunarodna Sorabotka) has won projects under EIDHR 2008 and EIDHR 2009 and Polio Plus (EIDHR 2007 and IPA Component I 2008). Under the same Country Based Support Schemes (08/09) the Citizens Association REACTOR Research in Action has also won two projects.

The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation has also won a project under the IPA 2007 Component II – Cross-border cooperation (CBC) Macedonia-Albania (MK/AL) which makes it one of the most successful Macedonian CSOs when it comes to getting EU funding¹¹.

Other most successful organization for the period of 2007-2009 is a CSO from Prilep called Center for Civic Initiative (Centar za Graganska Inicijativa). They have won funds under IPA 2007 Component II – Cross-border cooperation Macedonia-Albania, under EIDHR 2008 and under IPA 2008 Component I under Civil Society.

Apart from the already mentioned CSOs other organizations that won more than one project in this period, are: the Pelagonija Regional Development Agency PREDA Fondacija (EIDHR 2007, IPA CBC MK-AL

¹¹ This is only concerning IPA and EIDHR funds intended for Macedonia. The author does not go into the organization's other funding opportunities as the idea here is not to analyze the organizations by themselves but to see the trend of dissemination of funds under the specific EU programmes and instruments.

2007); Local Development Agency Struga (EIDHR 2007, IPA CBC MK-AL 2007); Centre for Improvement of the Quality of Life of the Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families Poraka Nova Association (IPA CBC MK-AL 2007, EIDHR 2008); Coalition for Fair Trials (EIDHR and IPA 2008) and the Women’s Lobby and Action Against Violence and Trafficking in Women Open Gate (EIDHR 2008 and IPA 2008).

As there are strict criteria for winning these types of grants and having personally seen the work of some of the organizations mentioned, the author of the paper does not think that there is some hidden agenda behind the repetition of the same organizations in the granting of the funds. However there are some other issues that contribute towards the fact that out of the staggering number of registered CSOs (it was 11.326 organizations in 2010)¹² only 45 won grants from IPA and EIDHR in the period of 2007-2009 and 10 of those repeat throughout the years.

Since there is no available data for IPA grants contracted in 2009, and for EIDHR and IPA in 2010 and 2011 this paper cannot comment on the increasing of the number of CSOs that won projects and what is the state of repetition in those years.

Another reason why there are few organizations which apply/win EU grants for civil society could be also found in the objectives or themes for grants that Macedonia and the EU set up for the country each year.

EIDHR ¹³	IPA ¹⁴
<p>For the present 2010/1 Country-Based Support Scheme for Macedonia, these Guidelines for Applicants set out the rules for this Call for Proposals in line with the Objective 2.</p> <p>Based on the approach of umbrella priorities for providing for civil society organisations in the country an opportunity for comprehensive and long term planning for a three years period for the EIDHR CBSS portfolio (2009-2011), this Call also envisions actions under the three thematic priorities, as following:</p>	<p>Grant Contracts 1,5 M EUR to be launched during 2011 to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Sector through grant projects in:</p>

¹² Macedonian Center for International Cooperation “CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Long road to increased citizens engagement” – RESUME and Recommendations for future Civil Society Policies, March 2011.

¹³ European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) 2010 Country Based Support Scheme (CBSS): Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in Promoting Human Rights and Democratic Reform, Guidelines for Grant Applicants

¹⁴ Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations, Needs Assessment FYR of Macedonia Final Report, Skopje September 2011, page 8.

<p>1- The pursuit of common agendas for human rights, democratic reform, freedom of expression and independent media based on joint cooperation among civil society organisations and building coalitions across different communities for enhancing the inclusiveness and pluralism notably in the context of the Ohrid Framework Agreement</p>	<p>Fight against corruption and organised crime (including fight against trafficking of human beings and fight against illegal substances)</p>
<p>2 – Enhancing political representation and participation of civil society in developing and implementing public policies, at different levels of decision-making process, including coalitions building for lobbying and advocacy on legislative reforms throughout a participative dialogue with 'political society', in particularly focused on institutions on local self government level.</p>	<p>Strengthening the CSO management and networking, including joint implementation of community based activities and social services, resource mobilisation, mobilising voluntary work, institutional cooperation CSOs/Government.</p>
<p>3 - Promoting non-discrimination, social inclusion and social rights, including minorities and in particular the Roma with explicit mainstreaming on women and children right and rights of persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Protection of human rights, with a focus on vulnerable groups, victims of family violence, mobilization of the municipalities for prevention of HIV/AIDS/STI amongst the most at risk including activities within the Decade for Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015.</p>

Some of the objectives from EIDHR for 2010/2011 are almost the same with some of the objectives in IPA 2009 (contracted in 2011). One can argue that this repetitiveness of funds (protection of human rights, protection of minorities, democratization, cooperation government-CSOs) leaves little space for broader spectrum of organizations to apply for EU grants. It also forces organizations that maybe have different interests to change them in order to be eligible for these funds thus leaving other areas of research and activism on the margins.

4. The views of the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) concerning IPA usage and the CSOs.¹⁵

We are facing with a lot of negative comments regarding the use of IPA funds in Macedonia and most of them are that Macedonia is losing the money.

According to the Regulations (for establishing and implementation of the IPA) specific rules are set up for starting of usage of the funds. The N+2+2 and N+3+2 rules means that the money for IPA 2007 is not intended for the calendar 2007 year. After the adoption of the specific IPA year by the IPA Committee in Brussels, Macedonian Government is obligated to sign Financial Agreement with the European Commission (EC). From this date there is period from 2 and 3 years for the tenders to be published by the PRAG rules¹⁶ and the contracts to be signed. From the date that the contract is signed there are 2 years for the implementation of the project. The estimation is that the money from the Financial framework 2007-2013 will be used until 2017/2018.

For the IPA Component 1 (most beneficial for CSOs), Financial Agreements for 2007, 2008 and 2009 are signed, for 2010 is expected to be signed by the end of 2010, for the 2011 is expected to be signed in the first half of 2012 and 2012-2013 is in the phase of programming. Programming of 2012-2013 according to the new MIPD 2011-2013 is sectoral.

SEA and the Unit for Cooperation with the Civil Society did establish regular consultation process with the CSOs in Macedonia regarding the programming of the funds, the calls for the projects and everything else that is connected to the EU Funds. In Skopje for instance there are regular meetings in the EU InfoCentre at the EU Mission. This is the 2nd year since this started and has improved the communication between the institutions and the CSOs willing to apply for these funds.

How is IPA 2009 managed:

- Component I – decentralized;
- Component II – the procedure for getting the green light for decentralized management is still ongoing;
- Component III, IV & V – decentralized.

About what can be done to help the CSOs in increasing their applications – The rules are set from Brussels and they are almost the same for all IPA users - certain budgetary - co-financing requirements are needed. The state institutions face the same issues as the CSOs regarding the rules. *Although they DO cooperate among each other when it comes to IPA funding.* SEA has 3 current projects together with different ministries – it eases their job especially when it comes to co-financing. Cooperation is crucial

¹⁵ Interview with Nevenka Stamenkovska Senior Programme Officer (SPO) Unit for Strategic planning, policymaking and monitoring, Secretariat for European Affairs. 28.10.2011.

¹⁶ Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions -
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/practical_guide/index_en.htm

for EU funds!

How do they know what needs to be funded in the country?

The process of identification of the needs is a long process – When it comes to the Component 1, SEA starts the process by identifying gaps by screening the National Programme for the adoption of the acquis (NPAA), and the strategic plans of the Government, Progress Reports, Accession Partnership, Enlargement Strategy and other strategic documents. After that consultation process with the potential final beneficiary is starting. Next stage is consultation process with the CSOs and the donor community in Macedonia. On the way to the final adoption of the programming year SEA is working in close cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union in Skopje.

Changes in already adopted projects are possible. That is why the project fiches sometimes are broader – they need to be as by the time the tender/call for proposals is published, a significant amount of time can pass by. Adjustments of the activities to the current situation are possible in several stages (Terms of Reference (ToR) or on the beginning of the project with the Inception Report) but this is also followed by the PRAG rules.

There have been lots of criticisms towards the Unit for Cooperation with the Civil Sector about its lack of capacities? What can be done here apart from the trainings to improve the cooperation with the CSOs?

If there is a need it can be transferred from Unit to Sector with bigger authorities and more stable human capacities. Apart from that, the staff working there is working on improving the capacities and receives training under several IPA projects.

Example of a successful training project for CSOs and other entities?

The project currently running in SEA - Technical Assistance for the IPA Training and Support Facility funded by the European Union has 35 trainings for state administration officials (12th is being done now), 35 for local self-government units and for the regional offices of the state institutions (12th done by now). The private and civil sector can take active part in those trainings that are organized for the local self-government units. For the transparency of the project we create Facebook page where we publishes all calls and next trainings. This is a really good tool that should be used more for promoting these kinds of trainings and for a closer cooperation between the institutions and the CSOs.

5. Current issues that Macedonia faces in the preparation and application for EU funds.

-There is an issue with the administrative capacity of the Unit for cooperation with the civil society in the General Secretariat of the Government. One of the reasons is the systematization of the public administration in general. Many civil servants do not want to deal with the extra work that comes with the handling of EU funds. Furthermore, the extra responsibilities are often times discouraging as in

Macedonia the civil servants do not get additional pay for dealing with EU funds (trainings, conducting application procedures etc.);

- according to Lidija Dimova from the Macedonian Centre for European Training¹⁷ Macedonia does not have a strategic framework for spending the EU funds – there is no national programme to date that addresses these issues;

-prevailing low cooperation among the civil society organizations themselves;

- “the CSOs are not dedicated enough to the relations with their members and other stakeholders. Foreign donors remain the main source of financing of CSOs in Macedonia and this leads to creating relations of upper subordination with the foreign donors...and downward relationship with the citizens...”¹⁸

-low transfer of know-how between the more successful organizations and the ones that never applied or never won an EU funded project;

-the prevailing sense that we (CSOs) are all competitors fighting for scarce resources rather than collaborators working on same issues;

- CSOs agreed that they lacked the required level of proficiency: preparation of project applications, especially for EC funds; knowledge of specialist policy areas including: (anti-) discrimination, disability, EU accession); policy dialogue, advocacy and lobbying; research and analytical skills (think-tank skills); financial management and knowledge and understanding of the tax regulations relevant to CSOs...An area of capacity shortfall which appears to affect the sector more generally is in public relations.¹⁹

-only few organizations have paid personnel i.e. personnel that receive regular monthly salary and are insured. According to the CIVCUS Report this in long term can lead to serious shortages of quality in the operations of the civil society. Added to this, volunteering cannot be taken as an alternative to this issue as it is itself practiced on a very low level;

- The biggest issue however is the lack of funds to operate on daily basis. According to the TACSO report most of the associations and foundations (85%) have an annual budget of up to 100,000 MKD (around 1.600 EUR) (Central Registry, 2011) which leads to the conclusion that the vast majority of CSOs has and operates with very limited funds;²⁰

- This explains why some bigger organizations repeat in the winning of EU funded projects. According to the same report the larger, fully professional CSOs tend to enjoy relatively high levels of financial stability owing to their ability to access funds from multiple international donors. Their high levels of capacity, both technical and financial, place them in a privileged position regarding the increasing

¹⁷ Conference “The National Parliaments in the process of EU Integration”, 26th of October 2011.

¹⁸ CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Long road to increased citizens engagement” – RESUME and Recommendations for future Civil Society Policies

¹⁹ TACSO, Needs Assessment Final Report, page 22.

²⁰ Ibid., page 26.

amounts of available EU funding. Small organizational size and poor technical skills effectively excludes a majority of CSO in Macedonia competing for EC funds.²¹

6. Recommendations for effective use of EU funding opportunities.

This policy report was focused on presenting and assessing the situation with the IPA and other EU funding in Macedonia from 2009 until now, with a special focus on the civil society. The overall aim was to present the findings and offer recommendations and solutions for the future.

For the state institutions dealing with EU funding directly:

- Continue with the further capacity building of the Unit for cooperation with the civil society as it is the main link between the state and the CSOs.
- Increase the Unit's authority and restructure it to a Sector thus it will get more leverage and people for handling the *Sisyphus'* task of cooperation with the vast civil sector.
- Continue and improve the regular meetings with the CSOs regarding the programming of the money.
- Schedule info days all over the country once the new sectoral programming comes into force so the CSOs can learn what will be new in the EU funding.
- Start with the drafting of a strategic framework for spending of the EU funds.
- When making the project fiches pay greater attention to more diverse topics that go beyond democratization and protection of human rights.

For the civil society organizations:

- Increase the cooperation within the civil society especially when it comes to creating partnerships for joint project applications.
- Start creating networks for sharing the gained know-how and for joint applications as well.
- Transcend the self-interest and start working together more, the funds are limited but there is enough for everyone.
- Start employing permanent staff that can be further trained and educated. With that they can contribute more to the development of the organization and its sustainable funding.
- Pay more attention to the internships and voluntarism. Activate the student bodies, give them incentives for volunteering.
- Keep pressuring and lobbying in the government for greater funds, more transparent funding and greater support for development of truly independent civil sector.
- Increase the lobbying in the respective institutions about including broader and more current topics in the project fiches.

²¹ Ibid., page 26.

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People2People (P2P) Programme

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POLICY REPORT

EU Approximation and Integration Advocacy Programme Follow up – Macedonia and IPA Funds – guidelines for Civil Society Organizations & expectations for the future

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