

The Balkan region, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia (including Kosovo), Montenegro and Macedonia, in the past ten years was in a situation of destabilization and transition. The domestic and international efforts have significantly contributed for overcoming this period. However, despite these efforts, the situation is still delicate.

The civil society remains weak for providing timely and effective response to the needs of the target groups. The systematic development of the civil society and its role, particularly in the public sector, remains poor. The cooperation between the public institutions and civil society organizations cannot guarantee unbiased allocation of roles and resources. The capacities of the civil society organizations for cooperation with the media, as significant actor and channel of communication with the public, are bad. The networking, exchange of information, experiences, advocacy and lobbying as well as the other types of cross-sector and cross-border cooperation are not strong, mainly on ad-hoc level. The attempts for cooperation and coordination are seen with mistrust. In a situation when the financial assistance is reduced, the civil society organizations are competing among themselves. The existing cross-border cooperation is limited and divided among the same donors, methodologies and sectors. The networking with the civil society organizations and the networks from outside the region are also weak, particularly with those from the EU countries (with exception of the donor relations).

The project purpose is to improve the cross-border and cross-sector cooperation among the civil society organizations in SEE by improving the relations with the local communities/ public.

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 result of the project was improved access to information and skills for cooperation with the media and the entire public and the deliverable was the publication of the Balkan Civic Practices: 100 copies in English, 150 copies in Albanian, 150 copies in Serbian and 150 copies in Macedonian.

The main activity of the project was the publishing of the 4th edition of the Balkan Civic

Practices: Media Relations – Guide for Civil Society Organizations. The Guide was prepared and published upon the results of the two regional training sessions on media (i.e. case studies) and the similar Guide prepared by CNVOS for the needs for the Slovenian civil society organizations. The Guide has covered the following topics: importance of media relations for civil society organizations; communication with media; organization of media relations and events; PR tools and techniques (news, interview, press conference and media campaign). The Guide was published in English and translated in the regional languages: Albanian, Serbian-Croatian and Macedonian. This enabled the civil society organizations to improve the communication with the media and the public in their respective countries. The Guide was also published in electronic form (available from the BSCDN site) and in hard copy (550 copies). The English (original) version has 56 pages in 195x240 format, Macedonian has 61 pages, Albanian 59 and the Serbian 58 pages. The Guide was distributed to the organizations participating in the training and other partner organizations in the region. MCIC distributed the publication within the 6th NGO Fair (16 – 17 November).