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In 2000, the European Commission underlined the importance of cooperation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹, the Commission and the national governments in its communication “The Commission and NGOs: building a stronger partnership”² in which it stated that NGOs can make an important contribution to the development of democracy and civil society in the candidate countries. In the same year a statement of intent was signed between Government Office for European Affairs (SVEZ) in Slovenia and a group of NGOs that resulted in the establishment of the Centre for Information Service, Cooperation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS), a year later.

The second part of the publication offers an overview of the different practice of interaction between NGOs, governments and administrations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The cooperation between the government and NGOs is presented through: existence of government structures and NGO coalitions that support and promote the relationship between NGOs and the Government; Existence of strategic, policy documents adopted by governments that define long-term goals for the cooperation with the NGO sector; and Inclusion of NGOs in

the process of creation of the laws, policies and strategies.

The guide was written from the perspective of NGO practitioners and doesn't attempt to be an in-depth analysis of relationship between NGOs and government, but rather a guide through different practices and mechanisms of the civil dialogue that were developed in different environments. As such, we hope that it proves to be a useful tool for NGOs working towards strengthening the NGO sector and its cooperation with authorities - as well as an incentive for strengthened cooperation between these NGOs in the region.