



BALKAN  
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To all candidates in the European Elections 2009:

**Do not forget the future European citizens!**

BSCDN, a network of 14 main civil society development organizations from Western Balkan countries and EU Member States (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia), strives to contribute to strong, articulate and effective civil society in our countries as one of the most powerful tools for furthering the development and maturing of democratic institutions and the sustaining of the reform processes in the potential and candidate countries in the Western Balkans.

We believe that the enlargement policy of the European Union offers an important incentive for democratic and economic restructuring and an inspiration for overcoming political, social and societal divisions in the region. Under the current external and internal problems of the European Union, we fear that enlargement commitments by the EU will regress on the priority list of the EU and thus threaten the ongoing process of progress made in reforms in the region.

We believe the accession process should not be only an exclusive process between the EU Member States and the country's Government. It should encompass more than legal harmonization with the EU *acquis*. Assuring access by the citizens and civil society to this will enable for early familiarity and involvement of citizens in translation of EU *acquis* into realistic, effective and sustainable reforms for the benefits of the citizens of the accession and pre-accession countries.

**We therefore urge the newly elected members of the European Parliament and the European Commission to ensure that:**

- the *enlargement agenda* remains fully on course amidst these turbulent times of economic crisis and uncertain future of the Lisbon Treaty;
- most concrete and tangible benefits for citizens of the Western Balkans, such as immediate effect of the Schengen *visa liberalization*, are realized as soon as possible and strictly based on criteria defined in the Roadmaps;
- clearer and more accessible EU *funding and procurement guidelines* are developed for use at the EU and national level;
- *EU funding* for civil society development in the potential and candidate countries in the Western Balkans remains sustainable and is programmed in consultation with civil society in light of withdrawal of other external donors and lack of alternative sources from national and private sector funding;
- *enabling legal and financial environment* for civil society is put in place as part of the political criteria for progress towards EU membership as a long-term strategy for sustainability of the sector after accession;



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S o c i e t y  
D e v e l o p m e n t  
N e t w o r k

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- *Governments* are held accountable to fulfill their commitments for development of civil society and civil dialogue as part of the political criteria for progress in the EU integration process;
- **growing initiatives for a more open, transparent and structured dialogue between civil society and the EU institutions are reflected in stronger inclusion of the civil society of the future EU member states in the policy dialogue regarding EU Enlargement.**

AIDRom, Romania

Albanian Civil Society Foundation, Albania

Center for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations, Montenegro

Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGO,  
Slovenia

CenzuraPlus, Croatia

Diakonia Agapes, Albania

Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, Serbia

Education for Organization in the Civil Sector, Croatia

Kosovar Civil Society Foundation, Kosovo

Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Macedonia

Opportunity Associates Romania, Romania

Pokrov Foundation, Bulgaria

Vesta Association, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Women's Alliance for Development, Bulgaria



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