



Technical Assistance for
Civil Society Organisations

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' CAPACITIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

A comparative summary of the eight country CSO needs assessments

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and description of the report

The EU-funded project, Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations – TACSO, is part of the IPA resource Civil Society Facility (CSF). The project is implemented by SIPU International from Sweden jointly with consortium partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Poland and Romania. The project is based in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The project's aim is to strengthen civil society within a participative democracy, as well as to stimulate a civil society-friendly environment and culture, to strengthen the capacities and accountability of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and to guarantee the quality of services of Civil Society Organisations and their sustainable role in democratic processes.

This report's overall purpose is to provide a basis for refining TACSO's programme of capacity development support to civil society organisations in the IPA countries, both at the regional and national level. The report is also intended to equip local and international development agencies, as well as governments in the IPA countries, with the information necessary to instigate further appropriate and responsive organisational support and capacity building actions for CSOs and civil society more generally.

The aim of the report is to compare and contrast the level of capacity development of CSOs as a sector in the IPA countries:

- To provide a general assessment of the state of civil society in each of the eight IPA countries, appraising its potential to promote development and social change, and elucidating trends and common opportunities and obstacles;
- To gain an overall and comparative understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity-building needs of CSOs in the IPA countries;
- To provide a set of general and country-specific recommendations concerning capacity development actions to enhance the organisational capacity and performance of CSOs throughout the IPA countries.

The report presents a comparative summary of the findings of national civil society needs assessments carried out by TACSO country teams (available at www.tacso.org) as part of the TACSO programme's inception in the eight prospective-member countries of the EU in the Western Balkans and South East Europe (including candidate countries Croatia, Turkey and Macedonia¹ and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99,² Montenegro and Serbia). The data for the report are drawn solely from these needs assessments, which in turn were based upon primary research conducted in each country by

¹ Officially the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), referred to in the text as Macedonia.

² Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99 hereafter referred to simply as Kosovo.

consultations with a wide range of civil society actors, as well with representatives from the government, donor organisations and other institutional bodies, backed up by comprehensive desk studies of all available, relevant information.

Concentrating on the general structure and characteristics of civil society as well as the organisational capacities of CSOs, this report is intended to complement the findings of TACSO's earlier regional review of the national institutional environments in which civil society operates throughout the IPA region.³

1.2 Civil society

In line with the project's Terms of Reference and SIPU's technical proposal, the report understands civil society in the following two complementary ways:

1. All organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between public authorities and citizens. This definition clearly emphasises the associational character of civil society, while also accentuating its representational role. Civil society would include a variety of organisational types, including, NGOs, mass movements, cooperatives, professional associations, cultural and religious groups, trade unions and grassroots community groups (CBOs), etc.
2. A space for views, policies and action supportive of alternatives to those promoted by government and the private sector. This definition places the emphasis on social inclusion, social and political pluralism and the rights of expression in developing a participatory democracy.

However, in the IPA countries, both popular understanding of the term civil society and the legal definition of the category CSO are generally restricted to those organisational forms that are conventionally understood by the alternative term NGO; that is, registered associations and foundations. This distinction was observed in the TACSO civil society country assessments and so, for practical ease, clarity and coherence, this report takes civil society to mean the full assortment of registered non-governmental, not-for-profit associations and foundations, while recognising that the civil society in its entirety is composed of a much larger and diverse set of organisational forms.⁴

³ The Civil Society Environment in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Progress made by governments in the IPA countries towards establishing an enabling environment for civil society; TACSO; 19 August 2010. Available at www.tacso.org.

⁴ See also the TACSO Glossary of Terms for CSOs: Civil Society; CSO; & NGO and other related terms. Available at www.tacso.org

1.2 The context of civil society in the IPA countries

Civil societies in all eight IPA countries - understood as both the diversity of autonomous citizens organisations operating independently from the State and the Market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests and the arena for public participation and the free expression and promotion of a plurality of views – are young, weakly rooted in local culture and social consciousness, and still very much in their formative phases. The continuing emergence of civil society in the IPA region is intimately linked in all cases to ongoing processes in all eight countries of transition from autocracy to democracy and the establishment or reform of institutions facilitating democratic governance and the market economy.

*Western Balkans*⁵

In all the countries of the Western Balkans, there is a history of varied and vibrant civil activity organised around religious, educational, humanitarian, cultural and class interests, often associated with movements for national liberation, stretching back to the 19th century. The establishment of authoritarian regimes in the 1930s and communist rule in Yugoslavia and Albania after the Second World War, in particular, severely limited freedoms of association and expression, leading to a prolonged hiatus of independent civil society activity in the region.

In Tito's Yugoslavia, nationally-oriented and religion-centred groups were effectively banned by the Party, the League of Communists, while a rich array of mainly amateur membership-based social associations and special interest groups grew up in close association with local governments that were linked to, and under the control of the Party. These included youth groups, sports and cultural clubs, as well as societies for those with disabilities and professional associations. In Albania, the space allowed for independent civic activity during the time of communist rule from 1944-1990 was similarly, if not more restricted, removing the cultural and organisational foundations for the subsequent emergence of a modern civil society.

In all the countries of the region, the weakening of the legitimacy of one-party rule and the move to multi-party political systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s created the space for the appearance of the first independent civil society organisations and civic activism. For example, in Croatia the first intellectual societies, human rights and environmental associations and women's groups surfaced in the late 1980s, while in Albania, various rights-based civic movements and protests at the same time presaged the fall of the communist regime in 1990 and the establishment of the multi-party system, which in turn provided the opportunity for an incipient civil society based upon human right associations and women's groups in the early 1990s.

⁵ The following section makes use of CIVICUS CSI reports for Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro & Serbia, as well as Sterland, 2006 on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

During the 1990s, diverse civil societies broadly aligned towards both service provision and the promotion of democratisation began to emerge in Albania and the successor states of ex-Yugoslavia. The specific characteristics, as well as the pace and evenness of the development of civil society in each country was influenced by the impact of political and social forces, both national and regional, at the local level. In Serbia, civil society, dominated by anti-war, human rights and pro-democracy groups, became the focal point for political opposition to Milošević's authoritarian regime and was consequently demonised by the state-owned political and media apparatus and only began to receive wider social and political acceptance after Milošević's fall on 5 October 2000. In Montenegro (still part of the rump Yugoslavia along with Serbia during the 1990s), a majority of CSOs aligned themselves with the Montenegrin authorities in their struggle against Milošević's rule and their ambition for independence. This in turn led to a blunting of civil society's role as representative and advocate of citizens' interests vis-a-vis the government. In Croatia, the exigencies of the "Homeland War" of 1992-1995 slowed civil society's development, while Tudjman's authoritarian regime continued to impose severe restrictions on the independence of CSOs. As in Serbia in the case of Milošević, civil society played an important role in creating the conditions for the ouster of the Tudjman regime in 1999.

The effects of violent conflicts during the 1990s were extremely important for the development of civil society in all the Balkan countries. In both Macedonia and Albania, the influx of refugees arising from the Kosovo crisis of 1999 (and the socio-economic crisis and civil conflict in Albania in 1997), created pressures on and opportunities for civil society to concentrate on humanitarian assistance, interrupting the development of a civil society representing a more balanced array of civic interests (Almost 49 percent of the registered NGOs in Albania were established between 1997 and 2001).

In Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the two countries most affected directly by violent conflict, today's civil societies have to a large extent emerged from, and because of the conditions of war and post-conflict rehabilitation. International NGOs charged with the duty of implementing the massive international humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in these two countries actively promoted the emergence and development of civil societies based on a new breed of local western-style NGOs through which to disburse donor funds for humanitarian aid, followed by services and the promotion of democracy, rather than seeking to identify and bolster already existing forms of citizens' action and organisation. Donor intentions to induce a de-politicised civil society in these countries is clear from the early presence of a number of high profile initiatives aimed specifically at encouraging the growth of a formal NGO sector in preference to other forms of civil organisation. However, the early concentration on service delivery militated against the development of NGOs with a social vision and the capacity to campaign and advocate.

Three features are common to the emergent civil societies in all the Balkan countries. Firstly, the determining influence of international donor funds, whose changing and often uncoordinated agenda's (but broadly following a trajectory in all countries of humanitarian aid, to service provision, the promotion of human rights and finally to long-term development based on the promotion of good governance and CSO advocacy) established unsettling incentives and pressures on CSOs in their organisational development. Secondly, the revival and re-registering as independent CSOs of many of the state-controlled membership-based organisations from the previous communist regimes, such as cultural, sporting or disability associations. Lastly, the greater likelihood of the newer breed of CSOs, those established as completely new organisations post-conflict and/or after the establishment of formal democracy, to actively promote democracy, liberal values and undertake advocacy.

*Turkey*⁶

Modern civil society emerging within different political and social factors in which greater continuity with the past has been retained than in the Western Balkans.

Civil society organisations, mainly in the form of religiously-oriented, community or family foundations, began to emerge in the later period of the Ottoman Empire (1850-1917), created as philanthropic institutions with a social purpose beyond the sphere of the State. During the time of the modern Turkish state a new breed of foundation has emerged, based on business interests, whose main role has been investment in public resources and social support. From the time of the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, associations emerged, which operated outside, but in close relation with the State. Post 1945, when parliamentary democracy was officially established, civil society developed to incorporate business chambers, unions and township associations.

Despite the apparent wealth of civic activity during the modern period in Turkey, civil society as an arena for associational activity autonomous from the State and as a promoter of civic participation has only begun to develop in the very recent past. For most of this period, regardless of the nominal existence of democratic rule, associational life has been subjected to considerable interference and control by the State, owing to the pervasive and persistent promotion among elite circles of an ideology of state which defines its citizens as those with duties to serve the interests of the State and its modernisation, rather than those with individual social, economic and democratic rights and freedoms. During the post-1945 period state control over the civic sector steadily increased and reached its peak during three subsequent military interventions (1960, 1971, 1980), severely disrupting the democratic fabric of the country.

⁶ This section relies to a large extent on the CIVICUS CSI report for Turkey, 2006

Since the late 1980s, during which time economic liberalisation and the transition to the free market took place, a new liberal discourse on the axis of entrepreneurship, individualism and individual rights and freedoms has arisen which has challenged and seriously eroded the hegemony of the statist ideology. Concerted efforts by a new breed of elected political leaders to establish political freedoms, multiculturalism and human rights from the late 1990s onwards (who have led Turkey in its efforts since 2001 to reform law and institutions in order to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria for accession to the EU) have opened up the space for the development of a civil society increasingly oriented towards holding the state accountable and lessening its control and authority over the civic sphere.

1.3 Structure of the report

The following report comprises three sections, including this introduction, a review of CSO capacities in all the IPA countries, followed by summary conclusions and recommendations to the TACSO programme and its country teams.

Section two on CSO capacities includes:

- 2.1, a review of the structure of civil society in each IPA country, identifying the scope of civil society activity (numbers of CSOs), the main types of CSOs, their orientation (community, national, regional), their prevalence and distribution throughout the country, as well as a broad assessment of the comparative organisational strengths of different groups of CSOs.
- 2.2, details the various interests represented within each civil society, the most common field of CSO operation and the predominant types of activities undertaken by CSOs.
- 2.3, examines the human resources available to CSOs in each country, including the size, experience and technical capabilities of staff members.
- 2.4, assesses to what extent CSOs typically adopt strategic approaches to the planning and execution of their work and are equipped with appropriate analytical capacities to enhance strategic management.
- 2.5, reviews CSOs' external relationships, including relations with the general public and the levels of support received from CSO constituencies, the degree of integration of civil society as a sector, networking with like-minded organisations, and partnerships or coalitions for strategic and project purposes.⁷
- 2.6, considers the material and financial stability and resilience (potential financial sustainability) of civil societies in each country.

⁷ Relations with government and state institutional actors are dealt with elsewhere in TACSO's report on The Civil Society Environment with The Western Balkans and Turkey, *op. Cit.*

Section three identifies the key achievements of civil society in each country, including the principal social outcomes and impacts arising out of CSO activities.

The report concludes with *summary conclusions and recommendations*, drawing out regional trends and identifying exceptional capacity-building needs or areas of encouraging capacity development which show potential to be further built upon.

2. CSO CAPACITIES

2.1 Structure of civil society

In **Albania** the CSO sector is small and relatively undeveloped. Officially there are 2,231 registered associations, 311 foundations, and 552 centres. However, recent civil society assessments estimate the total number of active CSOs to number between 400 and 450. The sector is young and emergent: consultations carried out for the Albania Needs Assessment, with a limited sample of 31 organisations, suggest that a majority of Albanian CSOs are less than 10 years old, with only 35% dating back to the 1990s. A great many of the country's largest, most organisationally well-developed and sustainable CSOs benefited from considerable institutional and project funding from international donors from the 1990s, at a time when the donor community shared considerably greater enthusiasm for promoting civil society in Albania than today.

There is a clear capacity gap between urban and rural CSOs of all sorts, with those in Tirana, in particular, being assessed as having greater organisational strength and individual human capacities than CSOs elsewhere (HDPC 2009 & Partners-Albania 2005). Some of the most active and influential organisations at the community level, those working to provide rights-based education and mobilise citizens to participate in the decision-making process, are the professional Tirana-based elite, many of which have regional and local offices and centres. Of particular note is the generally poor level of constituency development by CSOs and low levels of community support they enjoy. Numbers of active, informal community-based groups are negligible and resources for supporting CSO development and providing organisational capacity support and training in the country are insufficient to meet demand.

The fragmented politico-administrative system in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** determines that few CSOs operate at either the state level or operate across the whole country. Only 6.4% of all CSOs are registered at the state level. At the end of 2008, there were a little over 12,000 registered CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Owing to the lack of a single register coordinating registrations from the entities, cantons and the state, this figure almost certainly includes a number of double registrations (for example, of CSOs registering at both the canton and entity levels), although the error in the total figure is probably no more than 1%.

On the basis of responses to questionnaires by CSOs in a recent mapping of civil society in BiH (HTSPE / Kronauer 2009), it is estimated that approximately only 55% of registered CSOs (around 6,600) are currently active.

Civil society activity is well distributed across the country, with over half all registered CSOs (51.1%) operating from smaller towns in more-or-less rural municipalities. Only a little fewer than one in six CSOs work in the capital, Sarajevo, and a further 23% are located in the larger towns (Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla). As might be expected, CSOs operating only in rural parts, away from areas of significant population density are few in number (7.7%).

Over 85% of CSOs have less than 10 staff members and /or under 100 members. Most CSOs are poorly financed and dependent on local authorities for what little funding they can access. An assessment of CSO budgets in 2008 made by the HTSPE / Kronauer mapping exercise concluded that in BiH almost 60% of all CSOs had annual budgets of under 15,000 EUR, while 19% of the total subsisted on less than 1,500 EUR a year. Only around 10% of all CSOs had budgets in excess of 250,000 EUR.

Official figures for CSO registrations in **Croatia** show that civil society is overwhelmingly composed of citizens' associations. Currently there are almost 39,000 registered associations in Croatia, comprising 93% of the total of all kinds of registered organisations recognized in Croatia as belonging to civil society, including, funds and foundations, national minority councils and faith-based organisations. Even allowing for the probable inactivity of a large majority of registered associations, in a population of fewer than 4.5 million, civil society is well developed in terms of the number of CSOs per capita.

CSOs are active in all parts of the country, but there is a clear concentration of activity in the capital city, Zagreb, and the surrounding central region, where almost 60% of all associations are located. CSO representation across the country's other two regions – Slavonia in the north-east and Dalmatia and Istria is relatively even geographically, with the exception of higher than average numbers of CSOs in the two regions' main urban centres and seats of administration, Osijek and Split, respectively.

Typically, the Croatian CSO is a small, more-or-less voluntary outfit, lacking professional infrastructure, with limited access to financial resources, working at the grassroots level and dedicated to the special interests of youth and children, women, people with disability and also pensioners.

As might be expected, there is a concentration of well developed, highly visible and fully professional NGOs working in Zagreb at the national level, usually carrying out advocacy and capacity building activities on a range of rights-based issues. In particular, Croatia is well furnished with NGO champions of human rights and, by extension, organisations monitoring governance and the democratic process, as well as holding the government accountable.

The ability, however, of the civic sector to influence public and political opinion and shape social policy is rather limited. Organisations with the necessary capacities to promote alternative views in public are low in number. They do not enjoy broad-based public support and government remains relatively resistant to new ideas which challenge the status quo.

As a sector, civil society in Croatia is poorly integrated. There is no CSO body or network which can coordinate the diversity of civic voices and interests in order to represent civil society in public and on the political stage. At the sub-sector level, leadership is not in evidence.

Officially there are a little under 5,000 CSOs registered in **Kosovo**, but it is estimated that fewer than 10% of these are truly active. Overall, civil society remains weak and under-developed. The average CSO is a small organisation, with limited staff numbers and skills, supported by a single donor and carrying out short-term project activities. Consequently, many CSOs are unable to both maintain a regular programme of work and achieve organisational resilience and sustainability. A conspicuous feature of civil society in Kosovo, originating in its almost total dependence on foreign donors and their short-term priorities, is the lack of real linkages to those whom it represents.

Civil society is represented across the whole country, including the Serb-dominated north and Serbian enclaves, but the greater majority of organisations, including the most active and well developed are concentrated in the capital Prishtina and other major towns, such as Peja, Prizren and Mitrovica.

At the centre, mainly in Prishtina, an identifiable elite of compact, but sophisticated professional NGOs has emerged which include a number of prominent think tanks, watchdogs and advocacy organisations that are oriented toward influencing the Kosovo government and the international community, including the EC Liaison Office.

Reflecting the social and geo-political divisions of Kosovo along ethnic lines, CSOs are predominantly ethnically exclusive. In general, CSOs representing minority communities are less developed and their restricted access to donors and government means they wield less influence with both municipal and central authorities (Sterland 2006). The continuing political impasse between the minority Kosovan Serb community and majority Kosovan Albanian community, as well as their geographical separation, makes meaningful civil society work across ethnic lines almost impossible (ATRC 2009). Inter-community work is carried out by international NGOs operating in Kosovo, particularly in areas of return or in and around the Serb enclaves to attempt some kind of reintegration.

In **Macedonia** it is estimated that there are around 9,000 registered CSOs. Of this number, sports clubs and cultural associations comprise around 40%. The number of active organisations is unknown, but it is believed that there may be as many as 2,000.

CSOs in Macedonia are predominantly located in urban areas. Forty-three percent of all CSOs are registered in the capital, Skopje, and the majority of others operate in the country's other large conurbations. CSOs are poorly represented in rural areas, and organisations here are less well developed organisationally and tend to be less active than those in urban areas. The ratio of urban to rural CSOs is 10:1 indicating that there are approximately five CSOs per 1,000 citizens in the towns, while only 0.5 CSOs per 1,000 citizens in rural areas (MCIC 2006).

There is also a clear cleavage within civil society along ethnic lines, with a large proportion of CSOs, even in multi-ethnic localities, mobilising according to ethnicity or national ascription. This reflects one of the dominant social and political divides within Macedonia, particularly between the ethnic Macedonian majority and the main Albanian minority.

In common with other Balkan countries, there are only a small number of fully professional CSOs operating at the national level, usually located in the capital, working in the fields of socio-economic development, good governance and civil society strengthening through a range of capacity building activities, advocacy and lobbying. They are larger organisations with high levels of organisational capacities, technical skills and specialist know-how and are well prepared to compete for and manage large grants and service contracts available from international donors, such as the EC. The greater mass of other CSOs consists of smaller, semi-professional or voluntary membership-based organisations, working at the local level. They cover a wide range of special interests and target groups, and provide services to the community and their members. Employment and participation in Macedonian civil society shows a high degree of gender imbalance, whereby (except in the case of women's organisations) men predominantly occupy management and administrative positions.

Civil society is well served by CSO support organisations which provide CSOs information, capacity building and other services with the aim of strengthening civil society. At the national level there are three such organisations: MCIC, FOSIM and the Centre for Institutional Development. In addition there are 12 CSO resource centres situated in smaller towns outside the capital.

There are 5,459 officially registered CSOs in **Montenegro**, comprising a vast majority of citizens associations (5,293), and 166 foundations; the main CSO database, maintained by NGO support organisation CRNVO, lists 1,141 CSOs. A possibly better indication of the numbers of CSOs which are not moribund and do at least carry out occasional activities is given by the figure of 822 CSOs submitting formal accounts to the Tax Agency for the year 2008.

Geographically, civil society activity is concentrated heavily in the country's most populated central region: 55% of those listed on the CRNVO database operate here, including 43.5% of the total being based in the capital city, Podgorica. CSOs are to be found in almost equal proportions in the southern coastal region (22%) and northern regions (22.5%) which comprise

the rest of the country. Apart from at the centre, CSOs are mainly present and active in the larger towns and the more developed areas of the country, such as Niksic and Bar, leaving rural areas and poorer regions poorly served by civil society.

A preponderance of Montenegrin CSOs are small, poorly resourced, municipally based organisations, dedicated to addressing issues in the immediate local community.

On average Montenegrin CSOs have six people engaged officially, but the modal number (most frequent) of those employed per CSO is as small as two.

At the national level, there is a core of well-established, organisationally mature NGOs engaged mainly in advocacy, research, monitoring and capacity building in fields such as the fight against corruption, public administration, poverty reduction and human rights. This small number of fully professionalised organisations is set in stark contradistinction to the vast majority of weaker, voluntary or semi-professional CSOs working at the local level, which in the main provide services to the community or their members.

There is only one dedicated NGO support organisation operating in Montenegro, CRNVO, providing a full range of assistance to CSOs regarding organisational development and individual capacity building, legal advice on founding and managing CSOs, and information on other CSOs, civil society activities, development agencies and donor opportunities. CRNVO is the effective secretariat to the NGO coalition “with Cooperation towards the Goal,” founded in 2006, which brings together 230 CSOs with the aim of promoting the sustainable development of civil society in Montenegro.

There are very few reliable data on CSOs **in Serbia** owing to the lack of a single unified register of CSOs covering all associations, as well as other forms of not-for-profit organisations. While it is thought that there may be as many as 25,000 registered CSOs in Serbia, a reasonable estimate of active organisations would be between 2,000 and 3,000.⁸

A cursory glance at the available CSO databases suggests that civil society activity is represented across the whole country, but is clearly centred in the capital Belgrade and the larger regional centres, such as Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac and Kraljevo. There is a supposed correlation with CSO presence and socio-economic wellbeing, with civil society activity clearly lower in the poorer areas of South and South-West Serbia.

At the centre, particularly in Belgrade and in seats of learning, such as Novi Sad, the capital of the autonomous province of Vojvodina in the north, there is a highly visible “elite” of

⁸ Since the adoption of the new Law on Associations in late 2009, CSO registration is administered by the national Business Register Agency. Existing CSOs have until spring 2011 to re-register at the Agency, after which time there should be a clearer picture of the total number of active CSOs operating in Serbia.

professional, modern NGOs, undertaking advocacy and capacity building in a number of areas of social policy, good governance, human rights and economic development. These organisations are socially progressive, entrepreneurial, innovative and well-versed in international influences and socio-political agendas, both within the region and in the context of European integration and focus on combating human rights violations, disbursing humanitarian aid for refugees and displaced persons, promoting peace and reconciliation, fighting poverty, and promoting democratic values and principles.

A second recognisable category of CSOs, comprising possibly the largest single grouping numerically, are those associations established mostly during communist times with mandates to provide or coordinate services in the community. These are generally old-fashioned organisations in terms of their administration and their approach to stakeholders, particularly the State and government. Originally they were shaped by and functionalised within the state “socially owned” structures and funded through state budgets. These associations include traditional professional associations, cultural and sports groups, service providers for those with special needs (such as the blind, deaf, those with learning difficulties, etc.) and hobby groups. Typically these CSOs are conservative, socially and politically passive, and with few human resources, organisationally weak, but they do have the necessary capacities to organise activities in the community and to reach their particular target or membership group. Many of the above are “self help” member organisations in the community, which are organised within nationwide unions or federations, according to structures inherited from communist times. These organisations are spread out all over Serbia, and they have branch offices in almost every town and municipality.

A third category of CSOs is a diverse group of more or less professionalized small and mid-scale NGOs, established from the mid-1990s onwards, covering a range of issues at the community level and acting as a focal point or hub of citizens’ activism. These associations retain a member-based service-orientation, but have developed in most cases through inclusion in internationally sponsored capacity building programmes into modern, active NGOs which apply a rights-based and capacity-building approach to their activities with their membership, leading them into areas such as advocacy, policy dialogue and the provision of services to members. Typically, these groups are included in national and international sector-based alliances and networks and are engaged in local economic development planning and undertaking small-scale development projects, mobilising resources from the community and the municipality.

At the neighbourhood level there is a considerable number of voluntary village councils or “Community Development Associations” (CDAs), most of which were established earlier in the decade under a nationwide USAID-funded community programme. These are engaged in local

economic development planning and undertaking small-scale development projects, mobilising resources from the community and the municipality.

In **Turkey** according to data obtained from state Departments for Associations at the Ministry of the Interior by TUSEV, currently there are approximately 83,000 associations and 4,500 foundations.

Civil society organisations are active in all of Turkey's 81 provinces, but their distribution is very uneven. There is a marked concentration of CSOs in urban areas, especially the three largest cities, Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir. CSO representation in the eastern, north-eastern, central and southern Anatolian region is particularly weak; the urban concentration of foundations is more conspicuous than that of associations.

While CSOs are clearly growing in number and the sector is developing rapidly, the majority of CSOs remain small, relatively weak outfits at an early stage in their organisational development. Their progress is typically attributable to the mobilisation of support from a small circle of individuals in the community. At the other end of the scale, the emergent civil sector is dominated by a small number of large, financially strong urban-based organisations with competent professional staff. Very often, these "Mega CSOs" (TUSEV 2006) have been established by well-known and capable figures from the private, public and academic sectors, who have been able to exploit their personal networks to attract significant private and public funding, recruit accomplished and prominent board members and thus lay the foundations for developing strong professional teams and high-quality programmes with broad geographical scope (TUSEV 2006).

Lack of suitable data from government sources makes it difficult to arrive at a useful typology of CSOs and their structures. In particular, it is impossible to determine the exact percentage of associations that have a member-benefit mandate (such as mutual solidarity organisations, and sports and social clubs) as opposed to having a mission oriented to providing benefits to wider public interests (such as the environment, education or youth).

Member-benefit organisations covering religious services (especially mosque building), sport and community solidarity comprise something over 50% of all CSOs (approximately 45,000). Among these member-benefit organisations and all types of association, mosque-building associations are the most common. In 2006, according to the Department of Associations, there were 12,760 associations dedicated to building mosques, followed by a further 8,590 organisations providing social assistance to the community (TUSEV 2006).

The most numerous category of solidarity organisations are hometown associations, founded by internal migrants from rural areas to the large cities as a means of mutual support in their new environment.

In 2006 there were a total of 265 federations and eight confederations, as well as nine trades union confederations registered in Turkey (TUSEV 2006). One of the largest federated structures is the Confederation of Disabled of Turkey, composed of five federations covering a total of 600 associations.

Vocational solidarity organisations comprise another important segment of registered associations whose combined membership covers around 10% of Turkey's population. These organisations exist to defend vocational interests (crafts, trades and such like) of their members. To a large extent they concentrate on catering for members' social and recreational interests through services given by coffee houses, bars and social activity centres and are therefore generally considered to lie outside the broad umbrella of civil society concerns.

Community-based organisations, such as sports clubs and disability organisations are often organised within formal national or regional federations or confederations according to declared "common objectives." These wider unions, however, are poorly organised and rarely able to fulfil their purpose of enhanced sector integration and representation.

Under the aegis of foreign assistance, especially EU-funded programmes, a limited structure of civil society support organisations, resource and training centres has developed, as well as a network of Turkish experts on civil society and CSO management. The majority of organisations offering CSOs support for their organisational development, as well as in carrying out technical tasks, such as project development and fundraising, are situated in the main urban centres. The only organisations dedicated solely to capacity building activities with the Civil Society Development Centre (CSDC), based in Ankara, but also running four local support centres. The Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV) is a research, resource and lobbying centre, dedicated to strengthening the legal, fiscal and operational infrastructure of the non-profit sector in Turkey. The Bilgi University Civil Society Centre is a unique university-based education body established to train CSO members, professionals and volunteers.

2.2 Field of operation / activities

The last ten years in **Albania** have seen a gradual increase in the number of advocacy activities carried out by CSOs of all sorts, as well as a growing interest in engaging the Government and local authorities in policy dialogue. This includes notable examples of well-organised election monitoring, campaigning against corruption, human rights monitoring and government watchdogs. While this is to be expected considering the large number of CSOs which are active in areas of human rights, gender and women's issues, youth, minority rights and the promotion of democracy and mobilisation of citizens and communities, there is a sense that many CSOs have embraced advocacy only as it became the funding priority for international donors in recent times. The general picture shows that CSOs' capacities to operate effectively in this area, particularly those outside Tirana, are insufficiently developed. Regardless of this trend, Albanian

civil society in essence continues to be most active, and probably most effective, in providing social services to the community, either as a part of the governmental system of social provision, or as a means of delivering supplementary or alternative services in areas such as health, education, and legal advice. The fields of activity and target groups covered by CSOs are not extensive in their number, and tend to focus on issues of rights and empowerment of minority and discriminated groups, issues surrounding good governance and service provision, all of which reflect the continuing basic concerns in society surrounding fundamental human rights, the need to improve democratic culture and to address poverty and poor living standards. During the consultations for the country Needs Assessment, CSOs admitted that implementing activities addressed to multiple target groups (such as, women, youth, vulnerable groups, etc.) is an instrumental tactic to broaden their funding base by appealing to as wide a range of donor interests and opportunities as possible.

CSOs in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** may be classified according to two broad categories: Mutual or member benefit organisations (MBOs), which are established to work exclusively in the interests of their members, and so-called public benefit organisations (PBOs); that is, those associations whose purpose is to act in the general public interest.

MBOs comprise a large majority (71.8%) of all the CSOs in BiH and cover a wide range of activities and organisational types, such as sports, hobbies and other recreational interests, culture, veterans' associations, refugee returnees, and women's and youth clubs, etc.

CSOs which are oriented towards the interests of the general public (PBOs) are in most cases devoted to providing specialist forms of non-institutionalised service delivery, such as social protection (children, vulnerable women and victims of domestic violence, unemployed, etc.), psycho-social assistance or education and assistance to assist citizens generally or specific social groups participate more fully in society ("empowerment"). These organisations comprise fewer than 30% of all CSOs in BiH. Many of these CSOs have been established by international NGOs as instruments for project delivery.

The most frequent activities undertaken by CSOs of all sorts in BiH are education, activities in local communities, providing advice and information, as well as lobbying for members' interests, while the least represented activities are oversight of public policies and work of state institutions and mediation. There is an almost total absence of CSOs dealing with issues of corruption and transitional justice.

Despite the member-based character of civil society in BiH, on average almost 50% of all organisations state that their main target group, or final direct beneficiaries, is the general public.

In **Croatia** the classification of CSOs by area of work in the Registry of Associations reveals that half (49.59%) of all registered organisations carry out either sporting or cultural activities. A

further 18.45% of CSOs are occupied in “economic” (9.95%) and “technical” (8.5%) fields, the exact meaning of which in both cases is difficult to define.

A major mapping of Croatian civil society and its capacities, conducted on behalf of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in 2007 (Hromatko 2007) proposes a different classification, based on field work with a sample of 745 CSOs, which excluded all sports clubs. As Hromatko’s research targeted active organisations, it presumably gives a more accurate picture than the Registry of what CSOs *actually do*. Her data is significant for revealing key differences with, but also in confirming the broad gist of the registry data. That is, that culture comprises the most common CSO field of activity (28%), and secondly, that Croatian CSOs cover a very wide range of other interests and that there is a relatively even distribution between all the possible activities. On the other hand, it suggests that a very large proportion of Croatian CSOs are active in social welfare and humanitarian assistance (a combined total of 25%), and that technical activities are in fact insignificant (0.2%).

The vast majority of CSOs concentrate on service delivery in the community, which in most cases include training and informal education (70.8%) as well as counselling and specialist professional services (46.9%). Roughly a quarter of all CSOs (23.7%) report undertaking some form of advocacy activity and almost 10% are engaged in monitoring the political process and the work of public administrations.

In **Kosovo** service provision, composed primarily of education, information campaigns and skills training courses, probably comprises the mainstay of CSO activity. Provision of social services and also humanitarian help is carried out in all municipalities by CSOs, in many cases by the branch offices of large Prishtina-based CSOs. Many organisations also carry out advocacy activities alongside their project activities. Current donor priorities of support to policy dialogue, government monitoring, watchdog activities and the fight against corruption are spawning both new organisations in this field and the increasing uptake of these activities by established CSOs.

A CSO capacity assessment carried out by ATRC in 2008, shows that Kosovo CSOs focus on a wide range of field of activities, such as women, youth, people with disability and environment. Apart from these themes, community development is observed to be the most common area of CSO activity.

Earlier reports have remarked on the very high number of women’s and youth groups operating in Kosovo, reflecting the young age of the population on the one hand and the large investment made by donors over the last ten years into promoting gender equality and women’s rights.

Macedonian civil society covers a wide and varied range of target groups and fields of operation. Apart from the numerous sports and cultural clubs, among the most active and

visible are women's associations, which commonly work on raising awareness of gender issues and advocating for the mainstreaming of gender in public policy.

Youth associations and human rights organisations are increasing in number and profile, while farmers associations are emerging as an important niche lobby. There are also a new generation of young environmental associations, promoting "green" practices such as, energy efficiency and society.

On the other hand, values associated with good governance and the advancement of responsive and responsible public administration, such as transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and participation are poorly promoted in Macedonian civil society.

Broadly speaking, CSOs working in the community provide a range of services in the community which aim to empower their constituencies. This includes awareness-raising, education and information services. Increasingly, however, CSOs are beginning to engage in advocacy, lobbying and public policy at the local level in support of their membership and broader constituencies. Neglected areas, particularly at the local level, are all activities which carry the potential of conflict with public administration and the authorities such as, monitoring of government performance, watchdog activities to ensure application of laws and regulations, and the fight against corruption.

In the youngest state among IPA countries, **Montenegro**, the only data indicating the spread of activities undertaken by CSOs in Montenegro is available from the CRNVO CSO database. This suggests that civil society covers a relatively wide and even range of the possible socio-cultural activities, but that culture and (community) arts, followed by environmental issues are represented in unusually high proportions.

The majority of CSOs continue to concentrate on service provision in the community. Apart from self-help activities, CSOs are active across the country providing a range of services in health, education, environmental protection and governance. Larger, more developed NGOs, working at the national level, provide a range of information and legal services. There are SOS hotlines for women and children victims of violence operating in eight towns in Montenegro.

Advocacy and related activities are mainly practiced by national (*de facto*) non-membership based organisations serving the whole community.

The main CSO database of CSOs active in **Serbia**, maintained by CRNPS, indicates that, countrywide, civil society retains a traditional focus on social and community services and charitable activities. The dominant means of action in these areas is service delivery, particularly in the areas of social protection, health, education and the law. This has been encouraged by the principle of equality of service providers from the public, private and civil sectors, established by the Strategy for the Development of Social Protection in Serbia (which will be endorsed under the forthcoming new Law on Social Protection) and has opened the

door for CSOs to institutionalize their services in the areas of care for the elderly, home care services, day-care services for persons with disability, and counselling services etc. In addition, The Ministry of Health supports CSOs in providing health services to the Roma population, as well as people who live with HIV/AIDS.

Socio-humanitarian issues are leading the classification of fields of operations of CSO in Serbia, followed by culture and arts, education and research, community development, environment, human rights, youth and students, business and vocational interests, women's rights, peace-building and non-violent action.

Advocacy for change in government policy and social attitudes with regard to the traditional areas of civil society activity – service provision, assistance in the community – is still the exception, and is mainly conducted by the small number of professional NGOs

It is noticeable that there is an increasing number of municipal-level advocacy initiatives, concerning a wide variety of local-level policy issues such as, waste disposal, social inclusion and budget monitoring. At this level, however, CSOs rarely have the organisational and financial capacities to sustain concerted campaigns over the longer period and in very many cases their activities are reduced to shorter-lasting information and educational campaigns or public events.

In general, civil society activities in **Turkey** continue to be dominated by charitable giving, self-help and the provision of services in the community. Traditionally, foundations have been an invaluable means of social support and investment in public resources, easing the burden on a fiscally weak and bureaucratically inefficient state unable to meet the challenges of service delivery. Wealthy foundations continue to concentrate in these areas, and are particularly active in building and modernising schools, universities, hospitals and museums.

Although the general public understands civil society in terms of charity and direct social assistance and the vast majority of CSOs promote solidarity and philanthropy, an increasing number of associations, on the other hand, are beginning to turn their attention to tackling the underlying causes of poverty and social, political and civic injustice. In 2006 the Civicus CSI Index report concluded that civil society in Turkey had reached a turning point from which CSOs were increasingly ready to go “beyond service delivery to engage more actively in the process of legislation reform and other activities to hold the state accountable.” Since 2005, CSDC has worked with over 1,000 of the more than 8,000 CSOs on its database, and its staff has observed that almost all of these organisations are aiming to work in some way on strengthening democratic participation and civil rights, even if the total number of CSOs in the country promoting values such as good governance, human rights, democracy, active citizenship and pluralism remains small.

CSOs, especially in rural areas and small towns, are not aware of their potential to provide input to relevant government institutions and the public administration to influence social policy.

The CSDC database of almost 8,400 CSOs reveals civil society carries out a wide range of activities and covers a diversity of target groups. Self-help (Solidarity or mutual support organisations) followed cultural activities and folklore (usually in the community) are the most common CSOs activities. The promotion of the Environment, sports and education and health services are all common areas of activities, as too are the promotion of business / professional concerns and the interests of women. Organisations supporting human rights amount to only 1% of the total, those working to advance democracy number only 21, or only 0.25%, while only four or the 8,397 organisations listed promote gay and lesbian rights.

2.3 Human resources and technical skills

Financial constraints determine that most CSOs in **Albania** face serious challenges in engaging permanent professional staff. In most cases, CSOs retain between one and three professional personnel, who are employed on short-term project contracts, or on an annual basis. This is particularly so for CSOs located outside of Tirana. Previous civil society assessments indicate that a high number of CSOs in Albania (89%) have established formal policies and procedures for human resource management, including detailed job descriptions for board members (UNDP 2006). Despite this, most CSOs lack solid management and also leadership structures, in many cases purely owing to small organisational size and over-dependence on a single manager or the president / chair of the board of directors.

Although these key figures in the organisation are often well qualified and highly motivated individuals, they cannot compensate for the general shortfalls in management and administration skills experienced by many CSOs and the overall paucity of organisational capacity.

CSOs have been the subject of a many foreign-funded capacity building programmes over the last ten years, however in the course of conducting the country Needs Assessment CSOs listed their capacity-building priorities in the following order: project cycle management, advocacy and lobbying, human resource management, and public-private partnerships for improved local governance.

The Needs Assessment also found that, in general, CSOs in the northern and eastern parts of the country had received considerably less training and capacity support than those in the central and southern regions.

Participants in an earlier study by Partners Albania (2005) also identified needs for a further set of often fundamental capacity-building challenges commonly experienced by CSOs in Albania, including: lack of long-term strategic vision and plan of action, poor leadership skills – especially the concentration of decision-making and executive powers in the hands of a small number of

people, poorly developed culture of cooperation with other stakeholders - low number of project partnerships, weak networking, poorly linked to grassroots and lack of constituency, CSOs working in isolation, and low absorption capacity for (EU) funding.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** funding limitations determine that CSOs in BiH can rarely employ suitably qualified staff on a permanent professional basis. It is estimated that around 50% of active CSOs do not have a single paid employee, being dependent almost entirely on the voluntary services of key founder members and part-time voluntary contributions of members, friends and family. Only around 20% of all CSOs have paid staff with more than five members.⁹ In these and indeed all organisations, many employees work part-time or on a temporary basis dependent on short-term project funding. Permanent full-time employment in the sector is the exception. Overall, the sector is highly reliant on volunteer labour, with three of every four organisations engaging volunteers. Although volunteers are rarely employed within a formal framework setting out conditions of work and regulating the relationship between volunteer and volunteer-involving organisation, the use of volunteer labour is a key element of the funding strategies of many Bosnian CSOs.

Lack of experience and low qualifications of those applying to work in the civil sector is a common complaint of CSOs. It is noticeable that overall, only around 30% of those with paid employment in civil society have some form of tertiary education. CSOs very often have insufficient management capacity to employ a full-time staff.

CSO representatives consulted for the BiH Needs Assessment identified the following as priorities for organisational capacity building: community needs assessments and stakeholder analysis; PCM – and in particular EC application procedures and identification of project partners, human resource management, including staff development, networking at all levels – local, cantonal, entity, state, regional and with the EU, public advocacy and lobbying, involvement of CSOs in implementation of EC instruments for pre-accession, human rights protection, and public-private partnerships.

Croatian civil society is overall highly dependent on voluntary labour and CSOs, even the more developed and long-established NGOs, retain compact professional staff teams of limited size. Hromatko found that almost 53% of all CSOs had no paid employees, while the greater part of the remainder (43.2%) employed between only one and nine people. Greater organisational development and sophistication does not necessarily correlate with greater organisational size. In 2007, it was observed that the NGO GONG, a major political monitor and promoter of democracy was “certainly one of the largest [NGOs], with 18 employees, several regional offices, and an annual budget of almost 4 million HRK (approx. 700,000 EUR) (Blair et al 2007).”

⁹ In BiH no CSO has a workforce of over 40, and staff numbers of more than 10 indicate a “large” organisation.

However, many other professional NGOs of similar stature had markedly simpler structures and smaller staff sizes.

A great many of those employed at any one time in a CSO will be on temporary contracts tied to specific project activities. At the same time, CSOs of all sizes, but particularly the smaller ones, rely on the services of volunteers for carrying out many routine administrative and programme activities.

The principle of voluntarism is well developed within civil society and many smaller organisations are founded on volunteer action, which is often a pillar of organisational strategies to achieve sustainability. The general public views voluntarism positively and there is an increasing number of people willing to work in the community on a voluntary basis.

Management of human resources in the sector is relatively well advanced. In most of the associations (81.4%) the employees have job descriptions, while in more than half (66.5%) there is some kind of systematic evaluation of employees.

Associations continue to invest actively in their organisational capacities and the quality of services. Almost 50% of all CSOs have received training in basic technical skills (49.8%), particularly in project writing, but also often in strategic planning, financial management, project management, fundraising and advocacy (Hromatko 2007).

The indications are that CSOs need further training and education in advocacy and lobbying skills, especially in the areas of presenting their position effectively to the state administration.

There appears to be a high level of proficiency among CSOs in computer skills (64.2%) and foreign languages (63.8%).

As a whole, the civil society workforce is highly feminised. Although a small majority of CSO directors are male, CSOs primarily engage young or middle-aged women possessing either high school or university education.

In light of the high unemployment and low pay in the public sector in **Kosovo**, work in civil society here is an attractive option for many, particularly those with high educational qualifications. Civil society, particularly in the big towns, is blessed with sufficient numbers of suitably qualified potential staff. If a CSO has the resources to employ staff, it is most likely to have between three and five employees at any one time. In most cases, staff members are engaged on a part-time basis and on short-term contracts for the duration of specific projects. Only a very few CSOs have more than 10 full-time employees. At the community level, the “one-person show,” or CSO dependent on a single committed activist (and usually founder member) for routine administrative activities, is a common occurrence. Although voluntarism is weak generally, youth groups in particular and women’s CSOs to a lesser extent have some success in recruiting volunteers.

Specific shortfalls in CSO capacity noted in the literature and confirmed by consultations undertaken for the Kosovo Needs Assessment include: strategic planning (including understanding of the organisational mission and vision), fundraising skills, including the development of alternatives to foreign donor finance and understanding EC application procedures, constituency building and community needs analysis, partnerships and networking; human resource management, CSO law and financial regulations relevant to the sector, advocacy, policy dialogue, public relations and managing relations with the Media.

The majority of **Macedonian** CSOs are assessed as insufficiently funded to employ full-time staff, relying mainly on part-time or temporary staff and volunteers, usually engaged to carry out short-term projects. Only a very limited number of organisations, including the larger, well-established fully professional NGOs continue to enjoy the patronage of international NGOs.

Insufficient use is made of volunteer labour, particularly in the context of a structured and planned agenda of work. Volunteering is a concept that is still poorly understood and accepted among CSOs. Rare examples of good practice, however, do exist. The Youth Cultural Centre in Bitola has established a national volunteer centre in Bitola connected to five volunteer information points placed within other CSOs around Macedonia. The Centre has succeeded in mobilising hundreds of volunteers to carry out a variety of humanitarian activities, cultural events, and environmental improvements.

Staff competencies, skills and experience within the CSO sector often lie at two extremes. Employees in the more developed, professional organisations generally have high levels of capacity and skills and are often more highly qualified than their counterparts in the state administration and private sector. Those working in more community-oriented CSOs, however, are more likely to have few technical abilities and to possess insufficient specialist knowledge of their field of work.

From an organisational point of view, owing to the general paucity of human resources, systems are rarely in place for short and long-term planning, monitoring and evaluation, human resource management, etc.

An area of capacity shortfall which appears to affect the sector more generally is in public relations. In most cases, public relations are carried out on an *ad hoc basis* within the framework of short-term projects, usually as a response to donor demands for visibility.

The consultations carried out for the Macedonian Needs Assessment revealed a small number of skills areas in which 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, and 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.

The small average size of CSOs in **Montenegro** is a clear indication of the generally inadequate human resources available to civil society and the challenges faced by CSOs in recruiting sufficient numbers of staff of suitable quality. A great many CSOs suffer from “founders’ syndrome,” or an over-dependence on single dominant leaders for their identity and ambition. Smaller CSOs are also highly dependent on the part-time or “after-hours” unpaid work of staff members who are otherwise professionally employed in the public or private sectors.

Retaining the services of qualified and experienced workers is a major challenge for all CSOs in Montenegro.

Voluntarism in Montenegro is weak owing to a lack of tradition of non-governmental service in the community and an encouraging legal framework. Government and CSOs are not cooperating appropriately on this issue, although a major CSO, ADP-Zid, operates as a volunteer centre and is an important promoter of voluntarism at the national level.

In the main, CSOs are deficient in the technical skills necessary for organisational management, as well as the specialist knowledge related to their field of work (such as environment, human rights, economic development, etc.). Many organisations are insufficiently literate in electronic technologies, are poorly equipped and have poor access to the internet.

Lack of knowledge and awareness of EU policies and the process of European integration is especially high.

Training and support facilities for CSOs are few and far between. CRNVO is the only specialised NGO capacity builder with an established training team offering a full range of technical trainings and consultancy for organisational development. Outside the capital, Podgorica, there are no CSO resource centres providing technical support at the local level.

A number of the large professional NGOs run specialised programmes or “schools” in development theory and policy issues targeted at CSOs. These include: CCE - School of European integration, School of democracy, School of Human and Minority Rights; and School of Youth Leadership; CRNVO – School of Social Changes, School of European integration; EMIM - School of European Integration; NDC – School of Democratic Management; MANS – School of Active citizenship; Alfa Centre – REACT workshop (popularization of NATO in Montenegro); Ozon – School of Urban Ecology; Bonum – School of Democracy and Human Rights.

During the consultations for the country Needs Assessment, CSO representatives expressed interest in receiving trainings on the following themes: project cycle (EU funds), strategic planning, advocacy, organisational management, financial management, work with volunteers,

PR, monitoring and evaluation, establishment of coalitions and networks, fundraising – especially corporate giving and communication with the business sector.

One of the greatest challenges facing all CSOs in **Serbia** is how to recruit and then retain sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff and volunteers for the efficient implementation of planned activities. The average CSO does not have access to the financial support necessary to maintain a professional staff. For a great many smaller CSOs this is primarily owing to inadequate project development and fundraising skills, as well as poor access to information regarding grant schemes, government service contracts and opportunities for civil society or social partnerships.

A key determinant, however, of the quality of human resources available to all CSOs in Serbia is the structure and number of available donor funding opportunities. At present there are simply insufficient financial resources in Serbia dedicated to civil society to support all the organisations currently active. The structure of funding also dictates that all but the few professional NGOs which have obtained long-term institutional funding (usually from an international donor) and those community-based self-help groups, whose activities do not require material investments, are more or less dependent on short-term project funding. This is a major impediment to developing a professionally qualified staff. Project funding, as well as economic limitations on what organisations can pay are also impacting on the ability of larger fully professionalized NGOs to retain experienced staff. Many trained personnel are moving to the public sector, where jobs are more stable, or the private sector (including consultancy work for international projects and programs), which provides better salaries and professional development.

The sector as a whole has received considerable inputs in the past in terms of training for technical skills under a variety of international capacity-building programmes. Among the professionalized elite NGOs there is clearly a high level of technical, administrative and managerial competence. This also includes significant capacity for social research and needs analysis allied to often high levels of proficiency in advocacy, social campaigning and policy dialogue.

At the same time the average CSO remains poorly versed in all aspects of project cycle management. According to donor organisations, this is most apparent in the continued generally poor quality of project proposals – identification and project development – submitted by CSOs for funding. Some of the more basic fundraising skills, including getting to grips with the complexity of donor forms and accessing information on donor opportunities, are often not in place. Planning capabilities are also often weak, whether these are for organisational, action or longer-term programme plans.

Very few associations and foundations in **Turkey** are able to employ salaried managers and expert professionals; outside of the big cities CSOs are almost entirely dependent on volunteer labour and temporary paid assistants engaged on short-term contracts for the duration of time-limited projects. Consequently, staff structures are unstable and staff numbers and available skills fluctuate as scarce funding sources come and go.

Generally, CSOs are rarely managed by professionals who have experience or expertise in CSO or other forms of organisational management. It is also quite common for relatively well developed and well financed organisations to be lacking in suitable management know-how and systems. Individuals with the requisite skills and experience tend to find employment in the private sector where they can command considerably higher salaries than in the non-profit sector.

A great many CSOs are vestigial in structure being dependent on a single charismatic leader for organisational vision and everyday administrative and management functions. CSO leaders are more often than not male and middle-aged, a characteristic which is particularly marked in foundations. A 2006 survey (Çarkoğlu cited in TUSEV 2006) noted that over 80% of executives in 500 foundations were reported to be men, with an average age of 52 years old.

Voluntarism is extremely weak in Turkish society, so CSOs are constrained in their ability to engage sufficient numbers of motivated and skilled volunteers. The majority of CSOs interviewed for this report declared that they have either an insufficient number of volunteers or none at all. A World Values 1999 survey indicated that only 1.5% citizens reported to have been involved in voluntary activities. In recent years, there has been a positive trend in the promotion of voluntarism and total numbers of people volunteering in civil society has grown. Some universities, especially private universities, encourage their students to work voluntarily in CSOs, but these pioneering initiatives are insufficient to establish an adequate volume of volunteer services in society.

As might be expected from the above, the average CSO faces considerable shortfalls in the basic technical skills required for running an effective organisation. Poor fundraising skills and low capacity for financial management are among those most commonly mentioned. Low levels of technical infrastructure contribute to CSOs' challenges in these areas: nationally, there is only one computer registered between every 4 or 5 CSOs (that is, 17,081 computers for 83,000 associations).

As a sector, civil society is poorly equipped to carry out successful advocacy and policy analysis and otherwise influence public policy substantively. The effect of poorly developed skills in this area is compounded by the weak base of participation by the Turkish citizenry and the restricted space allowed by government and public administration to CSOs for engagement in these activities. Advocacy is practiced mainly by specialist human rights organisations, and

selected special interest groups with a rights-based agenda, such as women's organisations, some youth groups, and representatives of discriminated minorities, such as the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender groups. It has been observed, however, that many of these advocates, such as the main human rights organisations, are facing difficulties in sustaining their activities. In addition, most CSOs have no specialised staff for dealing with the media and they pay little attention to publicising their work and maintaining good relations with the public.

2.4 Strategic strengths and analytical capacities of CSOs

Strategic thinking in the **Albanian** civic sector remains poorly developed. Although over two thirds of CSOs consulted for the Needs Assessment (24 out of 31) reported that they have strategic plans in place, it is much more usual for CSOs to be lacking in long-term strategic direction. HDPC (2009) found that 62% of respondents to its CSO mapping confirmed that they possess no strategic documents whatsoever. Short-termism in the sector generally, financial weakness and lack of consistency in donor policy are key reasons for low levels of objective-oriented long-term planning and management, as well as the regular occurrence of "mission creep" among Albanian CSOs; that is, the practice of straying from or even abandoning one's mission, vision and organisational strengths in favour of chasing any or all funding opportunities.

There is a relatively large number of CSOs with the analytical capacities necessary for effective advocacy and policy dialogue. Albania is well furnished with well-established professional social and economic think tanks, as well as a number of prominent and sophisticated CSO promoters of human rights and participatory democracy. Unusually for the region, a considerable number of these think tanks like IDM, or IDRA are well connected to wider civil society and contribute to greater public participation in policy making.

Within wider civil society, analytical capacities are generally poorly developed, despite the relatively high level of advocacy activities. Few organisations undertake the most basic social research to ascertain constituency need or to assist in project identification.

Very few CSOs in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** are strategically oriented. Half of the CSOs consulted for the BiH Needs Assessment confirmed that they had a strategic plan in place, but most of them went on to say that they did not use it as a tool to guide their long-term programming and organisational development, as well as shorter-term project identification.

The key strategic issue for civil society in BiH as a sector is how to address itself to the ongoing process of European integration and the political, institutional and economic reforms demanded of the country by the SAA. At the centre, a number of leading NGOs have declared a strong commitment to the integration process and are actively advocating for civil society to become a partner of government in this process, particularly in the field of IPA programming and the planning of other EC investments, in order that they may play a role in shaping the

course of reform. On the other hand, however, the vast majority of CSOs in BiH have scant knowledge and understanding of the EU, the process of European integration and its significance for their work. In general, civil society in BiH is poorly positioned strategically to participate in the ongoing reform process and to take full advantage of the institutional and financial support available from the EC for the process.

Analytical capacities within Bosnian civil society are generally poorly developed. The low level of social and economic research undertaken by CSOs of all sorts is a key factor in the paucity of civil society advocacy and the low level of policy dialogue between CSOs and government bodies.

There are only a handful of clearly recognisable NGO think tanks, including IBHI (International Bureau for Humanitarian Issues) for general social policy and gender issues and the CSPC, dealing with civil society development.

At the centre, there are a number of effective CSO human rights advocates, which also monitor the implementation of human rights in the country (e.g. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights FBiH and also in the RS), but there is an almost total absence of CSO watchdog activities, with the possible exception of the local chapter of Transparency International.

Croatian CSOs appear to place considerable importance on their strategic direction. Almost 91.1% of associations have clearly defined mission and vision statements, while 61.9% associations report having developed strategic plans. However, many organisations interpret the term “strategic planning” to mean a one-year organisational plan.

A relatively broad spectrum of CSOs in Croatia, primarily professional advocacy NGOs, routinely carry out social research and thematic studies with the aim of contributing to CSO capacity building and public policy dialogue. There are several Croatian institutions and organisations engaged in regular research on various aspects of civil society development, including CSO needs assessments, while CSOs often produce thematic policy or briefing papers in their areas of work.

Subjects of social research primarily concern rights-based issues and are carried out by organisations specialising in these areas (e.g. women’s rights, human rights, voluntarism, election law etc)

With very few exceptions, CSOs in **Kosovo** do not engage in strategic planning. Clearly, the orientation of the sector towards scarce short-term project funding militates against long-term objective-oriented planning. Regardless of their stated organisational objectives included in their Statutes, the majority of CSOs either has no effective mission or routinely carries out activities beyond their mission, as a result of impromptu positioning around changing donor priorities.

Analytical capacities of the civil society sector in Kosovo remain weak. To a certain extent this is a corollary of the lack of CSO specialisation and low levels of strategic planning. Most of all, it goes hand-in-hand with CSOs' limited communication with their constituencies: few organisations undertake research to identify community needs or to provide the basis for programme and project identification and development. Shortfalls in analysis, and lack of experience in using both academic and participatory research techniques (such as PRA or PAR), inevitably impact negatively on CSOs' efforts to conduct advocacy and engage government institutions in policy dialogue.

In Prishtina, a number of capable think-tanks and other CSO advocates working mainly in the field of good governance and democratisation have emerged. These organisations have managed to create a credible public profile, and are quite active in providing government institutions with policy proposals, and publishing research and policy briefs for wider consumption.

In **Macedonia** strategic planning is a concept that is not widely understood or accepted by CSOs. Very few organisations have strategic plans in place in which they define their long-term programme and organisational objectives. Very often, strategic planning is carried out by CSOs in order to fulfil conditions for project funding from donors.

In place of long-term thinking, both programmatic and organisational, CSOs tend to be more focused on external relations in the here and now, and also on the implementation of activities. Dependency of the majority of organisations on scarce short-term project funds from nearly all donor agencies and the uncertainty that comes with it makes it extremely difficult for CSOs to devote energy and resources to mapping out their long-term futures.

An assessment of 26 CSOs, carried out in 2006, showed that only six were interested in developing strategic plans (OSCE, 2006). A minority of organisations in Macedonia has a fully functional formal structure in which a governing body provides strategic oversight and holds the organisation to its mission and vision in the long-term. Very often there is a concentration of power in a single person who occupies overlapping positions as head of both the governing and executive body. A related consequence of poor governance is that CSOs are insufficiently transparent and accountable.

Consultations with CSOs for the Needs Assessment reinforce the impression that analytical capacities among Macedonian CSOs are generally weak. The ordinary organisation does little in the way of social and economic research for purposes such as mapping constituency need, developing projects or undertaking advocacy campaigns. It also lacks the reflective capabilities necessary for building relevant strategy, advancing responsive approaches to stakeholders and understanding the complexities of organisational development.

There are three categories of CSO in which analytical capacities are present to a greater or lesser extent. Foremost is a small group of professional think tank NGOs which apply qualitative research to policy issues and may be considered as experts in their specific field. Organisations engaging in advocacy, which need analysis to support their goals form a larger group of organisations and analytical capacities here correlate closely to their overall organisational development and strengths in other programme fields. Thus, sector-wide there is little effective advocacy taking place, backed up by good quality research. CSOs rarely have the campaigning skills to undertake advocacy effectively, and often financial dependency on government funds undermines their ability to act independently.

There are also organisations of various types that show an affinity for research, but whose proficiency in this field remains basic and which have not yet found a way of integrating these activities purposefully with their mission.

As a sector, civil society in **Montenegro** has succeeded better than others in the region in raising its profile in the public eye and cultivating the trust of the people. This has been achieved primarily in two ways; through the successful implementation of high profile projects or campaigns which capture the public's imagination, and the cultivation over time of mutually beneficial relations with the national and local Media.

On account of advocacy and networking of national NGOs, the sector is also now well positioned to take advantage, in terms of gaining a greater involvement and say in the policy-making process, of the ongoing course of institutional and legal reform which will begin to gather pace as the country progresses towards European integration.

At the level of the individual organisation, strategic planning is rarely carried out and its importance imperfectly understood.

Only a very small number of CSOs have sufficient intellectual capacities and financial resources to engage in meaningful social or economic analysis which can serve as the basis for further work in the fields of advocacy and policy dialogue. In the broad field of economic and social policy issues, the ISSP (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses) is the only notable think tank. The ISSP has produced a wide range of research and policy papers on economic form on issues such as trade, tax and fiscal management, regional development. It has also conducted a number of household surveys on livelihoods and economic wellbeing in Montenegro.

In the field of democracy, good governance and human rights there is also a cluster of prominent NGOs acting undertaking research, advocacy and the monitoring of government performance and the democratic process. These include: CEMI, CEDEM, MANS and the Centre for Democratic Transitions (CDT).

In **Serbia**, CSOs' strategic plans, if they exist, are seldom carried out with appropriate methodologies with the participation of the whole organisation and key stakeholders. Plans

submitted to donors as a condition of funding are very often put together in haste on a pro-forma basis. Notable exceptions are to be found among the small professional “elite” of well-developed organisations which are well familiarized with their working environment, engage in research and analyses of changing trends, and plan the development of their organisational structure. Owing to their higher profile, organisation size or “weight” and their closeness to the political and institutional centre, they have usually managed to position themselves favourably in relation to the democratic and developmental changes gathering pace in Serbia in relation to the process of European integration. These organisations maintain close contacts with partner NGOs in EU countries and are members of a growing number of regional (Balkan) and European NGO networks and internet-based coalitions. For the remainder, taking the long view is a challenge.

Strategic thinking remains an unfamiliar capacity in Serbian organisational culture, not only in civil society, but in business too. Internationally funded capacity-building programmes delivered since the year 2000 have rarely supported either the development of strategy or organisational development. Strategic leadership, a key function of governing bodies, is frequently absent, owing to the rarity of truly functioning CSO governing bodies. Funding insecurity and project dependency militates against effective planning and creates often irresistible pressures for organisations to abandon their mission and a user-oriented approach to achieving organisational objectives in the search for achieving short-term financial security. “Mission creep” and the consequent loss of strategic orientation, as well the dissipation of specialised skills and experience, is a common phenomenon among Serbian CSOs, leading to significant falls in the quality of services provided by CSOs and major negative impacts on organisational sustainability.

Sector-wide there are few CSOs with the analytical capacities necessary for providing the basis for effective advocacy and policy dialogue. Few organisations undertake the most basic social research to ascertain constituency need or to assist in project identification. Documentary and internet research is rarely undertaken to advance programming or setting strategy. Analysis of what research does take place is generally of a low order. That being said, analytical capacities within the Belgrade-based NGO elite and other fully professional organisations in the larger towns are often of a high order. Apart from specialised socio-economic think tanks, including the Analytical Research Centre “Argument,” which is recognised for its work in research on civil society, there are many CSOs, particularly those engaged in capacity building and advocacy, for which social research and its analysis is a key output and also the basis for programming. Well known examples include, Civic Initiatives (civic education and democratic development), The Centre for Development of the Non-Profit Sector (CRNPS), The Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID), Transparency Serbia (anti-corruption watchdog), The Serbian European Movement (Promotion of plural democracy and European values), The Centre for

Liberal-Democratic Studies (CLDS – socio-economic and political think tank), and the 484 Group (refugee / displaced persons and peace building).

Strategic thinking and capacities are particularly weak in **Turkish** CSOs. More than 95% of CSOs have neither long-term strategic plans nor short-term (yearly) action plans. CSOs are managed on a daily basis, with key decisions (typically restricted to routine operational concerns and project activities) taken by managing boards only a short-time before the event.

A root cause of poor strategic direction in Turkish CSOs is the generally poor quality or absence of a clearly articulated organisational vision embracing an overarching, long-term social objective.

A corollary of poor strategic thinking, which itself contributes further to the strategic shortfall, is the typically low level of effective financial planning in Turkish CSOs. Funding insecurity and the inability to plan effectively to mitigate its effects – such as by devising means of recruiting volunteers or mobilising greater community support – make long-term planning difficult to carry out with any conviction.

Poor strategic direction of CSOs is a clear indication of generally low levels of analytical capacities in civil society necessary also for needs assessment, problem solving, intelligent programme design, advocacy and policy dialogue. Especially lacking in Turkish CSOs is basic social research to identify community needs and its causes in order to establish evidence-based programming and project design.

The CSDC database lists 94 (or 1.1% of its 8,397 CSOs) as being dedicated to research activities. These are by-and-large elite think tanks, providing policy inputs at the centre, but are poorly connected with both the grassroots and the greater mass of CSOs. They are usually founded by university academics and are particularly active in researching foreign policy, international trade and macro-economics.

2.5 External relations

Public perceptions of civil society and constituency support for CSOs

In **Albania**, The public profile of CSOs is low (USAID 2009) and civil society remains poorly understood by a majority of the general public. Awareness of CSO activities is limited and understanding civil society's role in representing public interests and advancing good governance is incomplete. This is largely the result of the failure of civil society as a sector to effectively communicate its values and purpose. Many members of the general public believe CSOs exist only to benefit the interests of their leaders and staff and that they do not represent grassroots opinion or the interests of target groups or the general public.

Public participation in CSO activities is low and membership-based organisations generally have low levels of community support and have done insufficient to build their constituencies. The

importance of public support for achieving advocacy and policy goals is poorly appreciated within civil society. The sector is also insufficiently transparent and accountable. This is correlated to the absence of a code of conduct and clear standards for CSO operations, as well as a reluctance to include memberships and constituents in the needs analysis and programming process. Improved performance here would assist CSOs to dispel the continuing public perception that civil society exists to further the individual interests of CSO leaders and staff.

A similar image problem exists in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, where civil society and CSOs are generally held in low regard. The term “civil society,” itself is problematic; it remains relatively new to people and its meaning is not fully understood. CSOs have been unable to organise successfully as a sector in order to publicise an agreed understanding of the role of civil society and communicate unity of purpose. As in Albania, CSOs here lay themselves open to criticism for not appearing sufficiently open and transparent, and are often perceived as existing more for personal benefit of staff and their leaders than members of the community. Recent research reveals that that only 18% of organisations undertake financial audits, and less than 5% publicize their yearly accounts (Kronauer 2009).

While there are plenty of CSOs in BiH, the majority of which are indeed membership-based, real participation and active membership in civil society is in fact very low. CSOs in BiH are poorly supported by their constituencies and enjoy little legitimacy in the community. A generally observed absence is the CSO practice of stakeholder analysis for identification of mutual interest and practical measures around which to develop cooperation, and inadequate application of participatory methodologies, as well as public suspicion of civil society, all militate against effective CSO-community relations.

The situation in **Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia** is not appreciably different from the above. In each environment there is a fundamental lack of understanding amongst the public as to what the term “civil society” means, and what is the legitimate range of activities that a CSO might carry out. For many ordinary people, CSOs are still regarded as wealthy donor-driven and foreign-funded opportunist organisations, which undertake activities for their own benefit to the exclusion of the poor and less educated and well-connected. The public also has justifiable concerns surround the sector’s clear lack of transparency and accountability, which is exacerbated by a general neglect on the part of CSOs of public relations and the publicising of civil society values, objectives, activities and achievements. In Macedonia, there is also the popular belief that CSOs are affiliated with, and manipulated by political parties for their own purposes. There is thus a perceived gulf between civil society and the public with regard to communication, interests, and expectations, which contributes to low levels of public support for, and participation in civil society.

The Macedonian Needs Assessment suggests that the problem is perhaps of a more fundamental nature, rooted in some of the more enduring characteristics of the Macedonian socio-political culture (and by extension the socio-political culture of all the Western Balkan countries). The legacy of a statist culture inherited from the socialist regime of ex-Yugoslavia determines that many Macedonian citizens continue to believe in the absolute authority of the State to cater for all social needs. This effectively absolves the individual of social responsibility and propagates attitudes of dependency and passivity which are antithetical to civic activism and enthusiasm for CSOs. A corollary of this is a deep suspicion of any form of social protest, advocacy campaigning or lobbying on the part of civil society which appears to question the established body of law and social policy. CSOs in Macedonia certainly, but also in the other countries in the region, are very often viewed as lacking both the competence and the legitimacy to engage in such activities.

In Serbia, CSOs must contend with a further problem concerning public image. Serbian civil society is still associated closely with the small number of outspoken human rights NGOs which have campaigned forcefully over time against Serbia's involvement in the recent conflicts including ethnic cleansing, war crimes and other human rights violations. In the past, these NGOs were frequently denounced in the Media and government circles as traitors, and they continue to be branded as such by certain politicians. Significant sections of the population continue to be swayed by these unprincipled attacks and civil society in Serbia enjoys the trust of only a minority of the general public.¹⁰

In all three countries, voluntary participation in CSOs, and also other forms of community support for civil society is low. There is a general failure within CSOs to communicate with community stakeholders, build grassroots relations and encourage community participation in their work, especially in the identification and planning of activities and programmes. This is a serious impediment to efforts to influence government, at the either local or central level, via advocacy and policy dialogue, as well as a missed opportunity for developing organisational sustainability.

Unusually for the IPA region, public awareness and approval of civil society in **Croatia** is generally favourable. In addition to positive coverage of CSO activities in the mainstream media, which accords recognition of leading NGOs as experts in specific areas, such as election monitoring, environmental protection or combating violence against women, CSOs themselves have established a variety of well-resourced alternative, issue-based, non-profit internet media outlets. As a whole, the sector is making increasing efforts to inform the public about its

¹⁰ A number of important initiatives have been launched recently to publicise successful CSO activities and raise public awareness and understanding of civil society in Serbia. These include the BCIF "Places in the Hearth" award for community initiatives, Partnership Building assistance introduced by TACSO in 2010 and the ISC / USAID campaign for a more "visible" civil society. .

activities and its role, for which it is in the enviable position in the Western Balkans in receiving government recognition and support, by means of public funding available through various line ministries and the National foundation for Civil Society Development.¹¹

Despite this, public knowledge and understanding of the sector remains at best partial. A recent survey showed that while nearly all Croats recognise the term “association/NGO,” only a minority understood its meaning. In general citizens have restricted knowledge about the full range of issues and fields of operation covered by civil society, associating civil society most commonly with Associations of the Homeland War¹² (39.2%), followed by those involved in environmental protection (36.2%) and election monitoring or political campaigning. Although civil society’s contribution to the promotion of human rights is widely recognised, a majority of the public, thinks that CSOs can achieve most in the areas of service provision and humanitarian aid.

Active support of CSOs, particularly by local communities and CSO memberships remains poor. This impacts directly on two areas of civil society. At the grassroots level, poor performance by CSOs in communicating with the community, including local stakeholders in strategy and programme planning, in order to building their constituencies, has a negative effect on organisational sustainability. Greater community support would translate into various forms of material and financial assistance, lowering dependency on project support and aiding longer-term financial planning.

Low public mobilisation also contributes to an almost total lack in Croatia of CSOs conducting watchdog activities to enforce standards and respect for legislation in public life. This is a problem encountered more by national NGOs promoting human rights, minority issues, anti corruption campaigns and the like, for which gaining majority public awareness of, and active support is difficult.

Montenegro is the only other IPA country where civil society enjoys both a high public profile and generally positive public approval. Public understanding of civil society also appears to be relatively well developed. Surveys conducted in 2008 (CRNVO & CEDEM 2008) pointed to a solid majority (58.6%) of citizens who considered that CSOs represent a good vehicle for people to self-organise and resolve important social issues, while a third (33.3%) believed that CSOs serve the needs of Montenegrin citizens and the greater public good. A major contributory factor to these findings is the high level of private media coverage of CSO activities generally and, in particular, those of national rights-based advocacy NGOs. National Television has recently commenced a regular broadcast named “The NGO Sector” aiming to cover the full range of CSO

¹¹ In 2007/2008 alone, NFCSD supported 20 projects focused on not-for-profit media, broadening the audience for information about NGO activities.

¹² This is a category in the current Registry of the associations; it includes veterans of the 1991-95 war, war victims associations, associations of families of missing persons etc.

activities. In addition, civil society has taken important steps to promote its public image by regulating its own behaviour, standards and transparency. In March 2007, after 18 months of consultations with CSOs around the country, the NGO Coalition “with Cooperation towards the Goal” (*Saradnjom do cilja*), published a national Code of NGO Conduct, to which 145 CSOs have signed up. It also appointed a seven-member self-regulatory council to enforce and monitor the implementation. Some 97 CSOs have also published their financial reports on an online database maintained by NGO public monitoring CEMI (<http://www.cemi.co.me/upitnik/>).

The majority of Montenegrin CSOs, and most crucially, membership-based organisations working at the community level, have been unable to build supportive constituencies. This is largely owing to capacity shortfalls on their side in terms of strategic direction, communication and methodologies for community mobilisation, but also because of the absence of a culture of community participation and charitable giving.

In **Turkey**, public perceptions of CSOs and civil society are complex, contradictory, but subject to observable change. A recent survey (January 2009) undertaken by CSDC confirmed the view (...) that a growing number of the population regard CSOs in a positive light. Sixty-three percent of those surveyed associate CSOs and voluntary organisations generally with values of democratic rights, unity and solidarity, and view them as a source of positive power. However these views are in stark contrast to those of the remainder who comprise a considerable minority (37%) which holds civil society in deep suspicion, associating it with terror, fear and social unrest. This illustrates the continuing influence of the devastating effects of the 1980 coup, which turned political engagement into an action to be strictly avoided and created an atmosphere in which CSOs were widely believed to be linked to criminal gangs or clandestine terrorist groups.

An important finding, which broadly corresponds with the situation in all IPA countries, is that positive assessments of civil society are considerably more prevalent among younger citizens. Positive regard for civil society in Turkey also correlates strongly with higher socio-economic wellbeing.

Regardless of growing public acceptance of civil society, CSOs are poorly supported by the general public and citizens are reluctant to support CSO activities, either by giving financially or participating in CSO activities. Individual giving is almost universal in Turkey, but only modest numbers support CSOs, the majority preferring to give directly to those in need. CSOs are insufficient to communicate with the public generally, research and address constituency needs, engage the community and encourage participation in their programming and activities.

Internal coordination of civil society

Integration and internal coordination of national civil societies in all the IPA countries is poorly developed. In general, effective sector-wide networks or national CSO bodies which can

coordinate the diversity of civic voices and interests in order to represent civil society in the public and on the political stage have not emerged. *De facto* leadership of national sectors is often provided by high-profile professional advocacy NGOs and civil society support organisations, although the legitimacy of these organisations is rarely uncontested in wider CSO circles.

Coordination in **Macedonia** is probably most advanced where there are over 200 assorted CSO networks, umbrella organisations and unions. In most cases, these networks are formed around target groups and specific social interests or sectors, such as women, the Environment, Roma, etc. However, broader cross-sector CSO alliances and coalitions are emerging. One such national network, important for its ability to provide leadership to civil society generally, is the Civic Platform for Macedonia (CPM), which gathers together 36 of the strongest national NGOs in a fully institutionalised self-funding network replete with governance bodies and a secretariat. The CPM is a space for free exchange of ideas and also a vehicle for CSO capacity building, with the aim of establishing the civic sector as an equal partner with the government regarding the development of participative democracy

In **Serbia**, civil society is provided by the collective representation by the *The Federation of Non-governmental Organisations of Serbia* (FeNS), a nationwide network of CSOs from over 120 municipalities covering all fields of civil society activity. Although FeNS is recognised by the government as the most important point of contact with civil society, it has had only moderate success in influencing government policy making.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, a recent development (on 15 December 2009) has been the signing of an agreement by over 370 leading NGOs from all parts of BiH to create the Mreža Sporazum Plus (Network Agreement Plus). The purpose of Sporazum Plus is to promote and advocate solutions to key questions important for the future development of the civil society, inter-sector cooperation and good governance in BiH. Its main focus will be to pursue the full implementation of the 2007 Agreement on Cooperation between the Council of Ministers of BiH and the Non-Governmental Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina via topical public forums, advocacy campaigns and other forms of coordinated democratic lobbying.

In BiH a Civil Society Board is also in place. Established as an institutional representative of civil society and counterpart to government on the basis of the 2007 Agreement on Cooperation, the Board comprises 31 CSO representatives from 31 sub-sectors. As its main role is following up on the Agreement, its potential for leading and integrating civil society at the moment, in the absence of the full envisaged institutional framework, is limited and indeed the last time it met was October 2009. However, the board is the only regular forum for gathering the diversity of CSO voices together in a structured and systematic way. The establishment and capacity building of a government office for cooperation with civil society is currently the subject of an EC-funded TA assistance project and, with the consolidation of a new Parliament

and the pending establishment of a new government following the general election in October 2010, there is now an opportunity for the Board to refresh its mission and renew its role as coordinator of civil society in BiH.

In **Croatia**, although there is no single CSO forum or representative body in place gathering input from the wider range of CSO interests, a Council for Civil Society Development (CCSD), a governmental advisory body composed of 10 appointees from state administrative bodies, 10 elected representatives of civil society and three civil society experts (as part of Croatia's well-developed system for mediating government support to and cooperation with civil society) - CSO relations), provides a forum for a direct and formalized dialogue between citizens' associations' representatives and public administration, on issues directly related to civil society development.¹³

The leading NGO support organisation in **Montenegro**, CRNVO, is the effective secretariat to the NGO coalition "with Cooperation towards the Goal," founded in 2006, which brings together 230 CSOs with the aim of promoting the sustainable development of civil society in the country. By promoting an enhanced role for civil society in public life combined with professional standards of transparency and accountability of CSOs, the coalition provides effective leadership and a viable structure for the coordination of civil society objectives in Montenegro.

In both **Kosovo** and **Turkey** there are neither national networks nor recognised CSO representative organisations around which CSOs may speak to each other or, more importantly, communicate with the government and other sectors.

CSO networks and cooperation

The TACSO country Needs Assessments reveal that most CSOs across the region recognise the value of CSO networking and other forms of intra-sector cooperation. A majority of CSOs in all countries are included in some form of network, local, national or international, though the effectiveness of such arrangements for information exchange or the pursuit of mutually agreed objectives, as well as their sustainability, is uncertain.

As indicated above, CSO networking and cooperation in **Macedonia** is relatively well-developed. A notable facet of Macedonian civil society is the great extent to which CSOs of all types join together to form networks, usually on the basis specific target groups of social policy issue, many of which are then registered as CSOs in their own right. Increasingly, CSOs in Macedonia are recognising the advantages of networks and coalitions as a means to strengthen their growing engagement in advocacy and policy dialogue. There is a trend for CSOs to form

¹³ See TACSO (2010) The Civil Society Environment in the Western Balkans and Turkey, op cit. for details of institutional mechanisms for government-CSO coordination in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the other IPA countries.

programme-oriented coalitions or partnerships around single policy issues, lending expertise and “weight” to a concrete agenda of practical activities. An example of this is the network Macedonia Without Discrimination, which is an advocacy and policy-making initiative to tackle discrimination in the country, run by three leading NGOs (MCIC, Polio Plus – Movement Against Disability, and the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution) but supported by a wider CSO coalition.

In **Serbia**, although there are very few functional networks at either the national or local levels, other forms of CSO cooperation are well developed, with CSOs regularly entering into formal partnerships for the implementation of individual projects. The practice of partnership was heavily promoted in the past by donors and international NGOs, and it was often imposed on the sector as a condition of funding or other support. The benefits of partnership are now being increasingly recognised by CSOs and it is a growing practice within civil society. Very few projects today are carried out by just one single CSO. In addition, CSOs are forming cross-sector partnerships, with local self-governments and public institutions, for example, with increasing regularity. Such social partnerships are becoming a popular way of applying for and implementing EU-funded projects, which are of mutual benefit to the respective partners.

Among the few successful CSO networks in Serbia the most prominent include two national women’s networks of SOS hotlines for women and children victims of violence, and the women’s peace network.

Most **Albanian** CSOs participate in some form of informal network, but the quality of CSO networking in Albania remains poor in terms of the active participation of CSO members, the solidarity, cooperation and exchange of information networks provide and the benefits accrued to organisational strength and programme activities. In most cases, networks are established in a more-or-less ad hoc manner, operate weakly and are donor driven. Few Albanian CSOs develop strategic or project-based partnerships with other CSOs and competition between organisations for limited donor funds consigns the majority of CSOs to work in isolation from each other.

Mutual distrust among CSOs surrounding competition for resources is also a key feature of poor coordination and low levels of information exchange between CSOs in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Despite this, many formal and informal NGO networks in are in existence in BiH, organised on the basis of sub-sector interest (e.g. Environment, youth, and women) or geographical location. Many of these have been in existence for a number of years. Earlier research has shown that a large majority of Bosnian CSOs are members of one or more networks and that this experience is seen by CSOs to be beneficial. According to the HTSPE / Kronauer study (2009), 52% of CSOs are members of a local Bosnian network, while 27% participate in at least one international network.

In **Croatia**, the majority of associations are members of either domestic or international networks, although in most cases networks are informal and operate as loose information-sharing circles. Formal networking, national and international, is strongest among advocacy-oriented organisations, in particular those working in the fields of women's rights, the protection of children, the Environment, youth empowerment and human rights. However, CSO capacity assessments have identified the need to improve the quality of networking generally in order to increase the influence to be gained through concerted action. Inexperience in network management is a key impediment to effective CSO lobbying and advocacy in Croatia (Pavić-Rogošić 2008).

Over the years, many attempts have been made in **Kosovo**, mainly at the behest of international donors and international NGOs, to form sub-sector and issue-based coalitions, as well as locally based networks at the community or municipal levels. In the greater majority of cases, these have proved short-lived and ineffective in harnessing collective capacities, owing to poor or contested leadership and an inability to identify common interests and establish shared objectives. Exceptions to the rule have been the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), a Kosovo-wide vehicle for advocacy for women's rights and gender equality (comprising 80 organisations from the whole of Kosovo, including those representing Kosovo-Serb women) and the Kosovo Youth Network (KYN – representing over 130 youth organisations and centres). Both have established institutionally accepted roles in policy-making process in their respective fields.

In **Montenegro**, communication between CSOs is inadequately developed. CSOs in Montenegro have been consistently reluctant to form networks, owing to often intense competition between organisations for funding and general lack of trust. Cooperation between organisations working in the same field is infrequent and CSO project partnerships are still very rare. This is despite the fact that Montenegrin CSOs have clearly managed to exert significantly greater influence on government and other national and local institutions on the rare occasions when they have worked in concert rather than individually. Shorter-term coalitions formed for carrying out single-issue campaigns, particularly in environmental protection or conservation, have proved to be not only the most acceptable, but also the most effective, if transient, form of CSO cooperation.

Successful CSO networks in Montenegro include the Network of SOS hotlines for women and children victims of violence (in existence for almost a decade), the Network for European integration processes and a various unions or associations for people with disability, and umbrella organisations of self-help groups.

Networking and cooperation between CSOs in **Turkey**, whether nationally or internationally, remains very limited, despite the attempts of the EU to promote this activity, particularly with regard to civil society in EU member countries. Women's and youth groups are the exceptions in having developed relatively good relations with CSOs and networks active in the EU region.

However, the trend in Turkey is for CSOs to work together increasingly through informal sector-based networks and issue-based “platforms”. Environmental and women’s CSOs are particularly well networked both at the regional and national levels, to the extent that it is possible to talk of environmental and women’s “movements” in Turkey. Human rights CSOs and other rights-based organisations are also following the trend of networking in order to raise their voice and increase their reach.

2.6 Material and financial stability and resilience

CSOs in **Albania** remain highly dependent on foreign funding, but reduced support from donors means that the resources available are insufficient to meet the needs of the whole sector. Most CSOs report that they have insufficient funds to carry out activities, in particular advocacy and campaigning (HDPC 2009). A particular problem is that foreign donors mostly provide project funding to support activities and only in very rare cases do they support administrative and institutional needs (USAID 2007).

Generally, CSOs’ capabilities to absorb donor funds are low. Many CSOs are too small and organisationally weak to manage larger grants, few CSOs have the institutional capacities to fulfil donor conditions for matching funds, and also to undertake required monitoring and reporting. A limited number of larger CSOs are eligible for EC funding, but they report limited success here and often complain that the EC application procedure is overly complicated and extremely bureaucratic. Very few CSOs have sound financial management systems or well developed fundraising skills which are deployed effectively to secure stable and secure financing arrangements.

Achieving financial viability is the biggest single challenge for CSOs in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. A majority of CSOs do not have sufficient annual revenues to undertake a meaningful programme of work. Over 50% of organisations assess that their financial situation is quite bad or very bad (HTSPE / Kronauaer 2009) and a majority of organisations at any one time have not secured funds for the coming twelve months.

Financial security has probably only been attained by the most efficient of the fully professional NGOs which may still enjoy long-term institutional support from bilateral donors or international NGO partners, and which have the technical abilities to develop a large quantity of high-quality project proposals each year and also have sufficient financial reserves to contribute to co-financing when competing for EC tenders. At the grassroots some of the larger sports associations will also have achieved financial security as they can pretty much count on generous support from the local authorities and / or the canton and entity administrations.

The single most important factor in the financial weakness of Bosnian CSOs is their almost uniform dependency on opportunities for project funding which inevitably militates against long-term planning and renders them unstable financially. At the grassroots, project funding is

provided by local government, which is allocated in an inequitable and non-transparent way, very often according to narrow politically partisan interests. The majority of PBOs including civil initiatives, human rights organisations, those providing social services and many women's and youth groups, are dependent on dwindling international donor funds.

Over 40% collect membership fees, and over one quarter (26.2%) receive voluntary support from members of the community. A similar number engage in self-financing activities, usually by charging for services provided. These sources provide a CSO an element of financial stability, but in most cases the revenue accrued in this manner is insufficient to fund activities or pay wages, and is no more than a marginal top-up to the annual budget.

The practice among CSOs of long-term financial planning and creating coherent fundraising strategy in order to secure predictable revenue from a diversity of funding sources is exceptional. Seventy-six percent of all CSOs in 2008 reported that they did not have a donor strategy in place and in effect react to project opportunities when and if they appear (HTSPE / Kronauer 2009).

Financial viability continues to be the weakest aspect of CSOs' sustainability in **Croatia**. The principal challenge is gaining access to sufficient funds to cover a meaningful programme of continuous activities.

Over two thirds of organisations remain dependent to a large extent on short-term project funding. For the majority of organisations, particularly those providing services in the community, this funding is available from state sources. Most of the smaller and medium sized CSOs find it difficult to access the increasing supply of EU funds on owing relatively inferior project development and writing skills and low absorption capacity.

Although service delivery is the predominant mode of CSO activity, few actively recover the cost of these services through fee charges or similar means. Even fewer associations use self-financing activities as their primary source of funding. Training organisations continue to be the most successful in terms of cost recovery. There are also recent examples of social enterprises founded by some associations like NGO ACT, Čakovec; NGO RODA, Zagreb.

Most CSOs gain a degree of material stability through access to relatively favourable infrastructure and equipment. Somewhat less than half of all CSOs in Hromatko's research sample enjoy rent-free premises (43%), a further 34% pay rent, approximately 10% own their own office space, leaving only 12.8% without working space.

While most CSOs express dissatisfaction with their technical equipment, the vast majority have the minimum provision (computer, printer, telephone line and internet access) necessary to run a small-scale operation.

The vast majority of CSOs in **Kosovo** face serious difficulties in financing their everyday activities and achieving longer-term sustainability. Poor technical capacities, inferior fundraising skills, lack of organisational specialisation with vaguely conceived missions, weak community support and inadequate strategic thinking all militate against CSOs effectively exploring ways to diversify their funding sources and increase their income. According to the preliminary results of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index survey,¹⁴ around 50% of Kosovan CSOs are financed solely from foreign donors, which provide 69 % of the total civil society revenues.

Alternatives to international funding sources, such as government support or corporate and individual philanthropy, are as yet under-developed and their current potential for expansion in order to increase civil society's funding base remains limited.

Kosovo's larger and more mature CSO service providers, such as Mother Theresa Society indicate a possible way forward for many community-based organisations, by consistently providing services to the grassroots on the basis of subscriptions from their large membership, volunteer labour and individual contributions from the community.

A significant majority of CSOs in **Macedonia** are under-funded, with insufficient resources to maintain a continuous programme of activities. Many CSOs are dependent on only one donor, either international or domestic, and there is an obvious lack of diversification of financial resources, rendering many CSOs financially unstable with low potential sustainability. In addition, the majority of organisations have neither the fundraising capabilities nor a plan of action to rectify this situation.

There is a certain group of organisations which were well supported in the past over an extended period by international donors (very often international NGOs acting as capacity-building partners and intermediaries with government donor agencies). These CSOs often remain dependent on their original benefactor which is no longer able to secure the scale of funding to which the local CSOs have become accustomed.

A larger group of CSOs are completely dependent on project funds available only through the uncertain process of competitive tendering; these organisations are especially vulnerable and financially unstable.

A small minority of organisations has succeeded in diversifying their funding by gaining access to a number of local sources, including membership fees, church funds and business donations. Although these funds are relatively small compared to project grants, they provide a more stable and predictable source of income which can provide for basic operational costs and can be planned for with more certainty.

¹⁴ The CSI Index survey and report is being carried out by the KCSF – Kosovo Civil Society Foundation.

Taken in its entirety, civil society in **Montenegro** is under-funded and financially vulnerable. There are no official statistics providing comprehensive, reliable information on CSO finances, but a review of the information concerning annual turnover submitted in 2007 by the 123 CSO signatories of the NGO Code of Conduct, indicates that almost half of all CSOs (48%) have annual incomes of under 10,000 EUR, while only seven of the sample number, or 5.7% have incomes of over 50,000 EUR.

Up until 2010 the stronger, leading NGOs have generally been financially secure. They have enjoyed good relations with many foreign donors and in most cases have succeeded in securing support from a variety of foreign agencies simultaneously, thus rendering their organisations more resilient and financially sustainable. USAID (2009) has observed that these elite NGOs are also beginning to diversify their sources of funding significantly, including charging for goods and services and developing funding relationships with business. One NGO, Exeditio, for example, was able to finance 30% of its activities in 2008 through fees for services and gifts-in-kind; the Nansen Dialogue Centre and the Centre for Democratic Transitions were able to finance their "Women in Government" project in its entirety from funds attracted from three domestic companies. However, with the recent departure from Montenegro of a number of bilateral donors, increasing numbers of these "elite" and otherwise well capacitated organisations are experiencing revenue shortfalls and longer-term financial insecurity.

Smaller CSOs and those active at the community level do not enjoy financial stability. In the main, these CSOs rely on the finances available from local-self government and the Parliamentary and Government Lottery funds. However, these sources are insufficient to satisfy the current demand, and the lack of adequate and transparent application criteria governing these public funds compromises the principle of impartial and equal access offered to all CSOs, thus limiting their effectiveness as a means of support to civil society.

The average CSO also has insufficiently developed capacities to access foreign donor funds due to their low levels project development and writing skills, inexperience with the logframe methodology, poor English language skills and lack of administrative or management capacity to absorb all but the smallest foreign grants.

A large majority of CSOs in **Serbia** are unable to finance their organisations adequately, and overcoming financial instability and lack of sustainability are the biggest challenges facing CSOs and the sector more generally. In the 2008 USAID NGO sustainability index, financial viability of Serbian civil society is adjudged to be the lowest of all the countries in the Western Balkan region by some considerable margin. Another survey of CSOs, conducted in 2009, found that only 56% of all CSOs currently active in Serbia would secure funding for their projected budget. Major factors behind this precarious situation are the continued inadequacy of state funding available, exacerbated in 2009 by wholesale cuts to the National Budget as a result of the worldwide recession, and the poor financial framework in which CSOs work. On the other hand,

CSOs have done little to adapt to the changing donor environment and the reduced availability of international resources. In addition, civil society in Serbia is conspicuous in lacking almost any CSOs which are driven by their membership or local constituency, whose support would provide the key to long-term financial sustainability in a world without external donors. The growing importance of EU funds to the financing of civil society (and development in Serbia, more generally) has raised unrealistic expectations among CSOs regarding both the amounts of funding that will be eventually channelled to CSOs and the extent of access available to these funds. The technical requirements and the conditions for co-financing attached to EC funding are beyond the capacities of all but a few of the larger, more well developed NGOs, effectively contributing to a two-tier environment of funding opportunities.

Most CSOs in **Turkey** are very weak financially. In general, foundations are financially more secure than associations, owing no doubt to their basis in an endowment or some form of material property. A majority of foundations own their own premises, while associations will generally occupy rented office space. The vast majority of associations have an annual income of less than (usually considerably less than) 25,000 EUR, the minimum amount, as calculated by CSDC, necessary for the smallest organisation to cover rent and operational costs, excluding wages for professional staff.

As with many other facets of Turkish civil society, CSOs in the metropolitan areas, such as Ankara and Istanbul, tend to be financially stronger than those in smaller towns and cities. The financially weakest CSOs are those in East Anatolia followed by the Central Regions, and the inland areas of the Aegean Region and the Black Sea Region.

In the absence of a suitable architecture of civil society programme and project support from both government and foreign sources, membership fees usually form the mainstay of CSO finance. In some regions, door-to-door collection and street campaigns are frowned upon as begging. Larger organisations, such as the Turkish chapters of Greenpeace, which mobilises donations from around 20,000 individuals, and Amnesty International, conclude, however, that with proper organisation, this kind of fundraising is both feasible and can be effective in generating sizable income.

3. KEY CIVIL SOCIETY SUCCESSES AND IMPACTS

This section summarises the most notable achievements in the development of civil society in each country and the principal social outcomes and impacts arising out of civil society activity. Greater detail may be obtained by reference to TACSO's individual country CSO Needs Assessment Reports.

Albania

- Active participation of a broad range of CSOs in drafting a broadly favourable CSO legislation (2001).
- A well-developed sub-sector of think tanks representing an impressive resource for the development of national social and economic policy, including furthering the government reform process and assisting the Government align policy, strategy and legal frameworks with the EU in order to advance European integration.
- Successive and increasingly widespread independent election monitoring organised by CSO coalitions over the period 2003 – 2009.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Gradual, but significant progress towards establishing government-civil society cooperation in a politically and institutionally complex and unfavourable environment. This includes the signing in 2007 of an “Agreement on Cooperation between the Council of Ministers of BiH and the Non-Governmental Sector” in Bosnia and Herzegovina that generated formal political acceptance for the first time of the legitimate role of civil society in the democratic policy-making process, and also established a basis for a future institutional framework for coordinating government-civil society relations, which is currently subject to a TA programme funded by the EC.
- Civil society advocacy, led by the largest NGO in BiH, the Centres for Civil Initiatives (CCS) has resulted in the adoption of over 70 policy recommendation and the initiation of over 40 concrete measures by state, entity and cantonal governments, to improve service provision in the spheres of poverty reduction, employment, and pension and health systems.
- A model for monitoring BiH’s Mid-term Development Strategy (PRSP) nationally by civil society was established by a coalition of 42 NGOs under a limited initiative running from September 2005 – September 2006.
- In May 2009, the BiH Council of Ministers (state government) adopted a Policy on Disability, as a direct result of a policy study undertaken by NGO, IBHI.

Croatia

- The establishment over the last ten years of a comprehensive institutional framework for cooperation between the government and CSOs, with an accompanying strategy for the development of civil society. The framework includes effective civil society participation and representation in all its structures, and strategy rests on broad-based consultation with CSOs.¹⁵

¹⁵ See also TACSO’s report on The Civil Society Environment with The Western Balkans and Turkey, *op. Cit.*

- Influence on the social policy agenda: Rights-based NGOs are an effective leader of public debate and instigator of public policy in areas of social and human rights policy which remain controversial including: gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights, animal rights, issues of national and regional peace building and establishing truth and justice in the aftermath of Croatia's involvement in the recent Balkan conflicts.
- Changing public opinion and raising awareness through CSO advocacy campaigns, including: greater public awareness and intolerance of violence against women, support for anti-corruption measures, awareness of disability rights and support for PWDs, and awareness of other minority issues.
- Participation in policy dialogue at the national level influencing the drafting of key legislation, including: the Gender Equality Act (which created institutional gender equality mechanisms) and the Law on the Access to Information.

Kosovo

- Among the strongest CSOs in Kosovo are a number of sophisticated research and policy think tanks, contributing to dialogue on democratic reform, the development of a market economy and future political and administrative options for Kosovo relating to Kosovo's declared independence in February 2008 and the country's inclusion in the process of European integration.
- In the very recent past (the last two or three years) civil society has developed a watchdog capability with the emergence of a variety of locally driven CSOs at the municipal level dedicated to fighting Kosovo's endemic corruption and holding democratically elected representatives to account.
- Internationally funded adult education projects and literacy centres run mainly by women's CSOs in the few years immediately after the 1998-1999 conflict are assessed to have had a major impact in raising the levels of literacy among rural women and their children.

Macedonia

- Civil society public awareness campaigns, community mobilisation and networking, as well as advocacy and policy dialogue have achieved important impacts in the empowerment of marginalized groups, in particular women, people with disability and the Roma:
 - Women: successes include a recognised women's CSO network, the establishment of the multi-sector Macedonian Women's Lobby active at both national and local levels, legislative changes owing to effective CSO advocacy (inclusion of domestic violence as a crime under the Criminal Code and the introduction of at 30% quota of

- female candidates on political party election lists), and wider understanding of gender issues and rights in the public;
- People with disabilities: Establishment of cross-disability CSO networks promoting a rights-based agenda, an Inter-party Parliamentary Lobby Group for people with disabilities, and a high-profile advocacy campaigning.
 - Roma: An active Roma CSO community mobilised via a Platform of Roma Organisations-RNVO Roma (2002) and significant Roma participation in drawing up and monitoring the National Strategy for Roma Population 2005-2015.

Montenegro

- The mobilisation of popular opinion in 2004 through the campaign to protect the Tara river and its canyon from plans to flood it for the development of hydro-electric power is civil society's greatest achievement to date. A large coalition of CSOs gathered sufficient public support to gain parliamentary approval of a "Declaration for the Protection of the Tara River," forced the government of the day to abandon its projected development of energy resources on the river.
- Significant improvement in the civil society working environment and the promotion of professional standards among CSOs have been achieved by the NGO coalition "By Cooperation towards the Goal," (over 230 CSOs), since its founding in May 2006. This includes the drafting and official adoption (2009) of a Strategy for Cooperation between the Government and NGOs, the publication and signing up to by 130 NGOs of a Code of Conduct for NGOs (2007), and the issuing of the document, "Structure of Public Funding for NGOs," which led to amendments to the Law of Lottery funds in 2008, in favour of civil society.
- Sustainable watchdog activities concerning local level public administration have been carried out in the southern coastal city of Ulcinj by a coalition of five local CSOs since 2005.

Serbia

- Civil society campaigning was a major factor in achieving the fall from power of Slobodan Milošević in October 2000 and the subsequent peaceful transition to genuine democracy. CSOs formed part of a broad coalition of opposition political parties, NGOs, media and trades unions, which fomented a critical mass of public support for regime change, building upon sustained campaigning by CSOs over much of the preceding 10 years for human rights, democracy, non-violence and peace building.
- CSO advocacy in the intervening period has been instrumental in the creation of a body of law which protects basic human rights and promotes the interests of minorities and

the vulnerable. This includes the criminalisation of domestic violence (2002), an Anti-Discrimination Law, (2009), in harmony with the EU acquis, a Law on Persons with Disabilities and supporting employment regulations, an Anti-Corruption Law and the law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance. In addition, CSOs have been key players in the development the new Law on Associations (2009) and the Law on Voluntarism (2010);

- CSOs working at the local level are recognised as having a legitimate and meaningful role in providing social welfare and protection services in the community. CSOs' part in the delivery of social services is cemented in the Strategy of Social Reform in Serbia.

Turkey

- Concerted action by women's CSOs in all regions of the country since the early 2000s has resulted in considerable advances in achieving the empowerment of women in what remains a largely patriarchal and culturally conservative country. Awareness of women of their rights and gender issues is in evidence and women's solidarity and self-support mechanisms have been established through CSOs. Achievements include: the establishment of the Ka-Mer Women's Network in 23 provinces in the East and Southeast, maintaining SOS hotlines against honour crimes and domestic violence and conducting regular dialogue with institutional stakeholders to establish an effective institutional and legal response violence against women, gender-based reforms to the Penal Code (2004), increased representation of women in political parties, Parliament and Municipalities, including the adoption of 30% quotas of women on political party election lists (2007), and the development of a network of 52 women's shelter houses across the country.
- The establishment of a human rights agenda within society and the raised public awareness of human rights generally, concerning fundamental issues such as freedom of speech, freedom from torture, the right to trial, women's rights and children's rights, based on increasing CSOs cooperation across the country (even though civil society has had very limited impact to date in influencing social policy regarding human rights and rights-based social change).

4. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil societies in all the IPA countries bear remarkable similarities in their defining characteristics and their level of overall development. CSOs throughout the region exhibit many of the same capacity shortfalls and share comparable challenges in raising their levels of organisational development.

A review of civil society's achievements across the region suggests that CSOs possess significant potential to influence social policy in all of the IPA countries through well-organised advocacy and constructive engagement in social dialogue with governments and other institutional actors. This is despite the generally low levels of advocacy and policy research skills and capacities currently in evidence in civil society in all the IPA countries.

Civil society successes point to particular potential power in mainstreaming and institutionalising minority interests and those of the socially vulnerable or excluded. In a number of environments, civil society is clearly a force for raising wider public awareness and acceptance of hitherto culturally sensitive issues or interests to which society is "blind," such as, those of national minorities, people with disabilities, gender and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender people. It has also demonstrated (e.g. Montenegro and Serbia pre-2000) its potential to mobilise wider public support – whether at local or national levels – behind broader issues of general social and economic concern, such as the environment, the fight against corruption and democratic change.

Enabling factors in successful civil society activity in the policy-making process include:

- concerted cooperation of CSOs over the longer-term through locally driven (primarily at the national level) formal networks or more permanently established CSO coalitions;
- the adoption of rights-based approaches to policy, rather than a needs-oriented focus (or one restricted to the particular interests of individual organisations and their memberships); and
- the mobilisation of target groups, CSO memberships and community interests around institutional objectives (legal, systemic, relational), which are of immediate relevance to people's wellbeing and welfare.

On the basis of relative numbers of viable, active CSOs possessing the full range of capacities required to fulfil their organisational purpose and achieve sustainability, all the region's civil societies are at a formative stage of development.

Civil societies across the region possess the following common features:

- The presence of a small cadre of "elite," fully professional and organisationally mature, rights-based NGOs working at the centre to promote human rights, good governance and socio-economic development by means of advocacy, research, policy dialogue and capacity building. They are oriented towards influencing national policy and national development processes and are frequently oriented towards promoting the process of European integration of their respective countries.
- An identifiable urban-rural divide between CSOs with organisations operating outside the main conurbations and in rural environments in particular, exhibiting markedly

lower levels of organisation capacity. In most countries, there are significantly fewer CSOs per capita population in rural areas. This disparity is particularly marked in Macedonia. The vast majority of CSOs in all countries are locally-based and community-oriented, operating primarily at the municipal (or provincial) and community level. TACSO should continue to target the capacity building needs of weaker CSOs, which are often either rurally-based, or those working at a distance from the main political and administrative centres. Greater efforts should also be made by leading domestic NGOs and all external assistance projects to mobilise stronger organisations to work with smaller and less developed CSOs – to offer both capacity building assistance and the opportunity to enter into activity-based partnerships.

- CSOs everywhere are invariably small, poorly resourced, semi-professional or voluntary membership-based organisations, possessing only a handful of full-time paid staff or volunteers. Very often CSOs are dependent on single leaders (often founder members) or very small groups of highly committed individuals for their continued existence. Most employees work part-time or on a temporary basis, their engagement and the professional activity of the organisation being dependent on access to scarce short-term project funding. Typically, CSOs are organisationally weak or under-developed, lacking financial stability and institutional strength (including weak memberships, low levels of constituency support and limited solidarity with other CSOs), as well as a full range of technical and specialist knowledge.
- CSOs across the region still face many challenges towards achieving organisational development and sustainability. This reconfirms TACSO's terms of reference regarding the delivery of capacity building assistance. However, the diversity and scale of CSO capacity building needs cannot be satisfied by a single project. To maximise its effectiveness in what is a very broad field, TACSO should continue its focus on CSO management, project cycle management and the facilitation of CSO access to EC grants and information.
- Service provision (particularly training, informal education and information services), humanitarian assistance, self-help and supplying benefits to organisation members, are the primary foci of civil society throughout the region. Advocacy and policy dialogue are carried out by a minority of the organisations, although recent international donor preference for these activities is generating increased awareness of, and interest in, advocacy in civil society at all levels. The limited organisational capacity of many CSOs, including poor networking capabilities, is a constraining factor on the wider uptake of advocacy and its effective practice; competence in this field remains largely restricted to the national "elite" NGOs and the issue-based coalitions and networks which they are able to mobilise sporadically. TACSO should increase its efforts to promote

national-level, sector-based networks and initiatives which aim to give public prominence to specific policy issues and bring wider groups of CSOs into dialogue with government counterparts.

- A wide variety of target groups and interests are represented by CSOs in the IPA countries. Particularly prominent universally in terms of numbers are youth organisations, women and gender rights associations, and to a lesser extent environmental organisations, social welfare groups (including health and various disabilities) and those dealing with community development. Although human rights associations are active in all countries, a conspicuous weakness is the low number of CSOs promoting good governance, in particular those focusing on the key areas of corruption in public life and oversight of public administration.
- Despite the above, sports, recreational and /or cultural associations at the community level account for a very large proportion (up to 50% in some countries) of all registered associations. In the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, these, along with a wide array of community-based disability associations, represent continuity with state-controlled membership-based civic activities from the communist regime.

Common capacity shortfalls and challenges include:

- Inadequate numbers of human resources with relevant management experience, technical skills and specialist knowledge. Financial weakness; that is poor access to insufficient donor funds and limited fundraising capabilities, is the main constraining factor in CSOs recruiting, developing and retaining competent staff. There is a need for many CSOs to strengthen their management capabilities, including strategic human resource management.
- A combination of poor management and human resource planning, inadequate strategic direction and lack of attention to building constituency support and responding to community interests militates against the more effective mobilisation and coherent deployment of volunteers in most organisations (although the findings from Croatia suggest that CSOs of all sorts are making increasing use of volunteers and are leading the way in this regard). CSOs need to adopt more creative, flexible and longer-term strategies to developing human resources in order to tap into the considerable potential offered by voluntarism. One option, so far neglected throughout the region, is the forging of partnerships with businesses through which CSO staff and volunteers might work as “interns” in return for skills training and experience in management and administration.
- With the exception of Croatia, where strategic planning is routinely carried out by a majority of organisations, CSOs in the region have limited capacities for strategic

management. The concept of strategy is poorly understood and few organisations carry out long-term objective-oriented programme planning or organisational management. Short-termism is the typical mode of CSO operation, dominated by a focus on achieving project funding. Impromptu instrumental adjustments by CSOs to changing donor agendas are a key factor in the common occurrence of “mission creep” in CSOs. Many smaller, less-developed organisations do not possess well-developed and clearly articulated missions and visions, adapted to the interests of target groups and the organisation’s capacity and specialist skills. This confirms the importance TACSO is placing on strategic management within its CSO management training component.

- Typically, CSOs in all countries are poorly informed of national social and economic policies and longer-term development strategies, including the key process of European integration. Apart from the very limited numbers of “elite” development NGOs working at the national level, civil societies are poorly positioned to contribute to and take advantage of the opportunities offered by these processes. This emphasises the need not only for increased information on the instruments and modalities of EC funding for civil society, but also that there is a requirement among CSOs for this to be understood within the wider context of EU policies on enlargement, integration and development to a far greater degree.
- Low levels of analytical capacity in CSOs, including skills for policy research, stakeholder analysis and participatory needs assessment, are a major constraint on the wider engagement of CSOs in advocacy and policy dialogue. In combination with other interventions, TACSO could assist here by facilitating exchanges between CSOs from the IPA region and similar organisations from the EU – particularly those from the 12 newer EU member states (post-2004 intake) where civil society has developed under comparable conditions of democratic and economic transition.
- Public awareness and understanding of civil society, its purposes and the range of interests it represents is at best partial in all countries. Public support for and participation in civil societies is universally limited. CSOs, individually and as a sector, are insufficiently transparent and accountable to local stakeholders, and need to raise their efforts to publicise their values, objectives, activities and achievements and to communicate directly with the community. Lessons may be learnt from good practice in these areas (media relations, use of alternative media and transparency) in Croatia and Montenegro, where public approval of civil society is markedly higher than the remaining countries. TACSO could facilitate this exchange in order to intensify civil society collaboration with the media throughout the region.

- CSOs in all countries enjoy poor constituency support and typically slim CSO memberships rarely participate actively in the identification, design and implementation of programme activities. Lack of attention by CSOs to stakeholder analysis and the practical inclusion of memberships and the wider community in programming is a serious impediment to efforts to raise organisational performance and sustainability. Responsiveness of service provision is reduced and advocacy and policy dialogue conducted without a “critical mass” of stakeholder voices. Access to a fuller range of volunteer support is limited and CSOs have reduced opportunities for material and financial support from the community which would provide a degree of financial stability via predictable alternatives to short-term project funding from donor organisations. CSOs at all levels across the region would benefit by “opening up” to their constituencies by promoting greater community involvement in their work and establishing increased internal democracy based on wider stakeholder inclusion; TACSO could encourage this by providing information on good practice from CSOs operating in the EU.
- At the sector level, the civil societies of the region are generally poorly integrated and represented. High levels of distrust among CSOs owing to competition for scarce donor resources and poor communication between CSOs militates against the development of sustainable broad-based national CSO networks and undermines the legitimacy of *de facto* CSO representatives (leading NGO promoters of civil society). Macedonia’s Civic Platform of CSOs offers a model of good practice in terms of the development of sustainable institutional structures for CSO coordination and representation, which could be built upon in other countries, especially in BiH, Montenegro and Serbia, where national networks have been established.
- Networking of CSOs based on geography, target groups or shared interest is common practice, but CSO networks rarely function effectively or achieve sustainability and are rarely established with agreed-on objectives and a clear, properly administered agenda of work. Very often, CSO networks are donor-driven and have suffered from a lack of local leadership and ownership. Youth and women’s organisations are most likely to establish sustainable, broad-based and effective networks which have proved effective in coordinating CSO action, especially in policy dialogue. Rights-based CSOs with advocacy objectives are increasingly active in all countries in establishing networks. In some countries (especially Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), shorter-term arrangements for cooperation, such as coalitions or partnerships formed around single policy issues have proved effective in lending expertise and “weight” to concrete agendas of practical activities. The formation of further CSO coalitions and networks,

and the strengthening of existing ones should be encouraged in order to expand civil society's role in policy dialogue and assist it to maximise its potential.

- Achieving financial viability is the single biggest challenge for CSOs across the region. A significant majority of CSOs in all countries are under-funded, with insufficient resources to maintain a continuous programme of activities. Dependence on project funding, subject to the uncertain and over-subscribed competitive application process, renders very many CSOs financially unstable and unsustainable. All civil societies in the region, with possibly the exception of Turkey, where civil society largely retains traditions of local fundraising, are conceptually dependent on international donor sources. Only a small minority of CSOs have either the technical capabilities to make serious applications to international donors or the organisational capacities to absorb the relatively large financial support offered by them. This is particularly so in the case of IPA and other forms of EC funding owing to the EC's technically rigorous application procedure and the condition of significant matching funds from grant applicant. Fundraising skills in all but the most efficient professional NGOs are poorly developed. Very few CSOs engage in long-term financial planning or develop fundraising strategies oriented towards identifying and developing a diversity of donor relations and alternative funding sources in the community. TACSO and others should increase their efforts to assist CSOs do this according to the specific local context.

Annex 1. Acronyms and abbreviations used in the text

ADP-Zid	Association for Democratic Prosperity
ATRC	Advocacy and Training Resource Centre
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCE	Centre for Civic Education
CCSD	Council for Civil Society Development
CDA	Community Development Agency
CDT	Centre for Democratic Transitions
CEDEM	Centre for Democracy and Human Rights
CEMI	Centre for Monitoring
CESID	Centre for Free Elections and Democracy
CLDS	Centre for Liberal-Democratic Studies
CPM	Civic Platform for Macedonia
CRNPS	Centre for Development of the Non-Profit Sector
CRNVO	Centre for the Development of Non-governmental Organisations
CSDC	Civil Society Development Centre
CSPC	Civil Society Promotion Centre
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EC	European Commission
EMIM	European Movement In Montenegro
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FeNS	Federation of NGOs of Serbia
FOSIM	Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia

HDPC	Human Development Promotion Centre
IBHI	International Bureau for Humanitarian Issues
IDM	Institute for Democracy and Mediation
IDRA	Institute for Development Research and Alternatives
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
ISC	Institute for Sustainable Communities
ISSP	Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
KYN	Kosovo Youth Network
MANS	Network for the Affirmation of the NGO Sector
MBO	Mutual Benefit Organisation
MCIC	Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation
NDC	Nansen Dialogue Centre
NFCSD	National Foundation for Civil Society Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBO	Public Benefit Organisation
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PWD	Person With Disabilities
RS	Republika Srpska
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
TA	Technical Assistance
TACSO	Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations
TUSEV	Third Sector Foundation of Turkey
USAID	United States Agency for International Development