

Quarterly Newsletter

Edition No. 6 October 2020

This quarterly newsletter provides information on the National Resource Centre's activities, on the latest developments in the civil society sector in Albania, on the funding capacity enhancement, networking opportunities for CSOs, and other relevant news from the region and beyond.

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EU TACSO publishes "Assessment of the Needs for Enabling Environment and Civil Society Capacities of the Western Balkans and Turkey" for the period 2018-2019

The European Commission has published the 2020 Enlargement Package

CALLS & OPPORTUNITIES

Calls

Announcements







1 Open letter

4 meetings with institutions



3 online meetings with CSOs

1 Study on the Status Quo conducted for volunteering in Albania





Networking Event "Volunteerism & Solidarity- Practices, Challenges and Future Development"

The National Resource Center for Civil Society (NRC) in cooperation with the Association Beyond Barriers (BBA) organized on 23 and 24 July 2020 the Networking Event "Volunteerism and Solidarity - Practices, Challenges and Future Developments".

The activity follows the work of several months of Beyond Barriers and the National Resource Center to identify and assess the problems and challenges that civil society organizations and informal groups face during the implementation of the legal framework for volunteering.

The wo day online event, brought together 163 youth civil society organization representatives, activists, donors, and public institutions, in four panels to discuss on important issues concerning volunteering: Legal framework, policies and structures for volunteering in EU and Western Balkan countries; Albanian legal framework, policies and structures in place for their implementation; Civil Society Organizations Practices of Volunteering and Solidarity in the country; Supporting and encouraging volunteering and active citizenship.

Part of a series of activities on this issue, this event contributes to the debate on the further development of volunteering in Albania, bringing an overview of the legal and regulatory framework of volunteering in the country, countries of the region and some European Union countries.

The event created networking opportunities for CSOs and other participating institutions, offering them the opportunity to generate contacts, present their work and specifically discuss and encourage dialogue and cooperation of all stakeholders and interest groups in creating an enabling environment. Read more about the event and panel discussions.

Upcoming Event!









Advocacy & Policy dialogue

Addressing issues on the draft Law "On the Registration of Non-Profit Organizations"







Following the facilitation of the consultation process with the sector on the Draft Law "On the Registration of Non-Profit Organizations", the National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania organized an online meeting with donors and representatives of international institutions in the country. The meeting was held also in response to the high interest of these institutions to know more on the draft law, the concerns of civil society organizations and recommendations with this regard. They expressed their support to CSOs to address further this issue, considering the impact it may have on the enabling environment of civil society in Albania. The Draft Law is in procedure at the Parliament.

Despite that, as part of the consultation process with the Ministry of Justice, many issues of concerns were raised by civil society organizations, unfortunately, only a small part of the

suggestions (15% of them) were taken into consideration, in this second draft published in the parliament website. In this situation and following the meeting, the group of NPOs addressed to the representatives of the Albanian Parliament a request to organize a hearing session with representatives of civil society organizations on the draft law.

This session will serve to present all the identified issues, their reserves and suggestions of the sector as well as to create opportunities for the establishment of continuous communication bridges in order for all these problems and suggestions to be subject of a legitimate parliamentary debate, giving of reciprocal arguments and based on international standards and good practices. The request was accepted by the Assembly and in the following days we expect the organization of the hearing.



Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organization, Country Report for Albania 2019



Partners Albania for Change and Development, the National Resource Center for Civil Society in Albania and the Balkan Civil Society Development Network published the seventh edition of the Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, covering key developments in Albania during 2019.

This report is part of a series of country reports covering seven countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

Among the main findings of the 2019 monitoring report we stress out:

- Lack of an electronic register with comprehensive records for CSOs to be used by public institutions and other interested stakeholders
- Increased state institutions control over CSOs operations, through approval of laws under anti-money laundry and anti-terrorist package that impede the independence of the sector.
- Strategies and mechanisms in place for state-CSOs cooperation (the Road Map and the NCCS) are not producing the expected results towards a more enabling environment for civil society, due to poor implementation and lack of reflection on the sector related problematics.
- Although CSOs are the main providers of social services, their contribution is neither fully recognized by the state, nor supported through an enabling legal framework that would facilitate their operation and access to state funds or other non-financial state support.
 For more findings and recommendations, read the full report

Opinion on the Draft Law "On the central bank account register" and its impact on civil society organizations



During October, civil society organizations, among other changes in the legal regulatory framework of the sector, were introduced to the government's legal initiative "On the central bank account register". This draft law is part of a series of legal developments that have taken place in the last 18 months, with a direct effect on the organization and functioning of the sector, as part of preventive measures for money laundering.

Despite the tight consultation deadlines, a group of NPOs worked to identify the most concerning issues, to then address them to the responsible institutions for drafting the law. therefore, an opinion on the draft law and the impact it will have on non-profit organizations was drafted and widely shared with all key stakeholders by the National Resource Center for Civil Society. Read more on the Opinion.

On Volunteerism and its further development in Albania

For several months, Beyond Barriers in cooperation and with the facilitation of the National Resource Center for Civil Society have organized several meetings with The National Agency for Employment and Skills (AKPA) and the State Labour Inspectorate, on law problematic issues and obtaining information on procedures and forms for implementation of legal acts. Further discussions and activities will be organized in the framework of developing an enabling environment for voluntarism in the country.



Advocacy & Policy dialogue

Civil society advocacy campaign on protection of Soda Forest - Vlora Regional Office







During June, a group of 11 civil society organizations with the initiative and coordination of the Vlora Regional Office of the Resource Center for Civil Society, organized an advocacy campaign. As part of the campaign, a petition was drafted on behalf of 22 civil society organizations addressed to the Mayor of Vlora, Vlora Municipal Council, Vlora Regional Prefect, National Agency of Protected Areas Tirana, Vlora Regional Council, and for information to all members of the Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape Management Committee, requesting the protection of the Soda Forest.

The petition follows a series of meetings of CSOs with local officials facilitated by the Vlora Regional Office, as well as a dedicated training, mentoring and information program on the legal framework designed and organized by the Center. In response to the request of civil society organizations, a meeting was organized with the Prefect of Vlora Region, the Deputy Mayor and a representative group of CSOs, at the meeting of the Petitions Commission of the Vlora Municipal Council. The meeting served to discuss the organizations request.

The three issues raised in the petition have become part of the recommendations forwarded to the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and National Agency of Protected Areas by the Vjosa - Narta Protected Landscape Management Committee, as well as councilors and the Mayor expressed their support for the rehabilitation of the of Soda Forest as soon as possible, appreciating the contribution of the civil society sector. Following, the Municipality of Vlora started an intensive work to remove trees ready to fall that posed a risk to the lives of citizens. The working group of CSOs will continue its advocacy until all points of the petition are met.

Roundtable discussion with civil society organizations in the North Region - Shkodra Regional Office

The Shkodra Regional Office of the National Resource Center for Civil Society organized a series of discussion meetings with representatives of civil society organizations in Kukës, Malësi e Madhe (VIS Albania) and Koplik (ARKA Youth Center). The Covid-19 emergency which has created a series of challenges and problems for the work of local organizations in this region was the focus of discussions with CSOs. The meetings aimed to explore ways and opportunities to support local organizations and communities.

Some of the issues addressed were the need for engagement and mobilization of young people in public and social life, grants applications for the development of rural life and the need for more efficient public services such as public transport for rural roads even in the afternoon which should be addresses by the Municipality of Malësi e Madhe. Shkodra Regional Office will continue to provide information, assistance, networking opportunities, facilitation of advocacy and mobilization processes for all organizations in the region.





Activities from the regional offices of the National Resource Center for Civil Society in Albania



Foto nga pjesëmarrja në mbledhjen online në Komisionin e Peticioneve të Bashkisë Vlorë me grupin e OJF-ve për cështjen e Pyllit të Sodës - **Zyra Rajonale Vlorë**



Qendra Burimore për Shoqërine Civile Vlorë ka ofruar një seri shërbimesh help desk për OJF-të lokale, duke i mbështetur për shkrim projekt propozimesh si dhe pjesëmarrje në takime/trainime online të fushës së tyre të interesit - **Zyra Rajonale Vlorë**



Gjatë takimit me Forumin Civil të Selenicës për ngritjen e një fushatë advokacie mbi ndërtimin e dy kënde lojërash - **Zyra Rajonale Vlorë**





Shkoder

Advocacy & Policy dialogue

Activities from the regional offices of the National Resource Center for Civil Society in Albania



Gjatë bisedës me Komisionerin për Diskriminimin mbi aktivitetet e NRC dhe mundësitë e bashkëpunimit **- Zyra Rajonale Shkodër**



Prezantimi i Qendrës gjatë eventit hapës së projektit "A strong youth a better future- YEEP Shkodra" **- Zyra Rajonale Shkodër**



Gjatë takimeve me përfaqësues të OShC-ve për të diskutuar mbi thirrjet për projekte gjatë muajit shtator - **Zyra Rajonale Shkodër**

Increasing Transparency and Accountability of CSOs

Code of Standards for CSOs



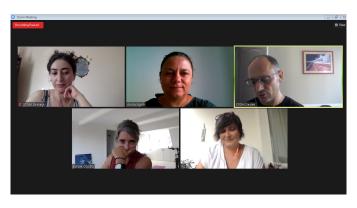
Following the process of drafting the Code of Standards for CSOs, during these months, the National Resource Center has organized a series of online regional meetings across the country to introduce and widely promote the Code of Standards for the sector.

About 100 leaders and representatives of CSOs, participants in these meetings, were introduced and gave their opinions on the draft Code of Standards developed by the working group, on the principles and commitments of the Code, implementing structures and the evaluation matrix on meeting the membership criteria to the Code.

The initiative is considered as very important by the organizations, further emphasizing the importance of establishing a good and unified practice of self-government in the sector, thus contributing to the CSOs sustainability and increasing trust among stakeholders, collaborators, donors and the public.

The National Resource Center will continue to widely promote the Code of Standards initiative also in the next month, with a series of dedicated meetings and activities across the country. With the Centre, in the role of secretariat of the Code of Standards, within 2020, its implementing structures will be finalized, paving the way for the membership of CSOs in the Code.

Exchange of experience between Resource Centers on mechanisms for improving the CSOs standards



National Resource Center for Civil Society organized an online meeting with representatives of the Resource Center for Civil Society in Turkey.

The meeting was held in the frame of regional cooperation in establishing good practices of civil society self-government to be more effective, accountable and transparent, and to increase public trust and improve the sectors` the image.

The Resource Center shared with colleagues from Turkey the experience of drafting the Code of Standards of Albanian CSOs, the process, implementation structures and the self-assessment mechanism. The Code of Standards is a set of principles and commitments on how CSOs do their job and take action to improve their results. Improving such practices and promoting them is and will continue to be among the main goals of the Center throughout its work.



Increasing Transparency and Accountability of CSOs

Celebrating Global Accountability #GAW2020

#BeAccountable #GAW20



During 12-16 October 2020, Partners Albania and NRC, joint the members of the Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA), a network of umbrella organizations hosted by CIVICUS celebrating the Global Accountability Week 2020 #BeAccountable #GAW2020.

The GAW aimed to promote civil society accountability, by presenting CSO accountability and transparency initiatives across the world, through a series of online activities, and to improve the understanding of the dynamic accountability practices and mechanisms, and learning more about these concepts.

The Resource Center and Partners Albania were part of several activities during the week, sharing their experience on drafting of the Code of Standards for CSOs in Albania initiative, work and efforts in this direction and consulting and promotional activities carried out with the sector.

Capacity Building

NPO Academy 2020





The NGO Academy 2020 program has continued with other virtual lectures on Strategic Communication, Creation and operation of networks and coalitions, Providing public support and work with the private sector - Fundraising and philanthropy, Participatory Governance and Advocacy and Lobbying, closing thus the cycle of lectures for this academic year. Lecturers with experience, experts in each of the issues of the afore mentioned but also special guests, have been part of sessions.



"Creation and functioning of networks and coalitions"



"Participatory Governance"





Mrs. Diana Nokaj -Manager of HUB in Kosovaldeas, was invited

to the Fundraising and Philanthropy lecture and shared information with academics on the first Crowdfunding Platform in Kosovo to fundraise in the field of art and culture, civic engagement and sustainability realized in and for Kosovo.



Mrs. Ilina Neshikj, Executive Director of

the Balkan Civil Society Development Network, special guest of the lecture who shared BCSDN experience, the successes and challenges faced in building and managing a network.



Also to offer a local perspective on the successes and challenges encountered in setting up,

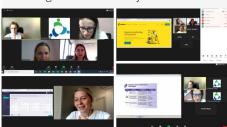
strengthening and managing a CSO network, in this lecture we had the pleasure to have invited Mr. Andi Rabiaj, head of the "Youth Voice" Network.



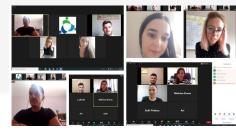
NPO Academy 2020

Assistance and mentoring sessions for NPO Academy participants

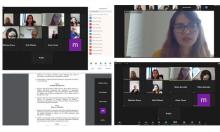
In addition to lectures, as part of the Academy in these months, about 20 mentoring and group counseling sessions were held with the participants of the Academy, to guide and provide further assistance in improving internal organizational policies and procedures, financial reporting and writing project proposals, developing strategic plans, communication and fundraising plans, and recognizing recent changes in the legal framework of non-profit organizations contributing to the improvement of their performance, the creation of labor standards as well as increasing their sustainability



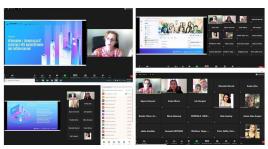








Training Programs for CSOs





The Centre continues to provide online training programs dedicated to the non-profit sector, based on the needs identified through the needs assessment of the sector, the regional offices of the National Resource Centre, as well as with direct requests from CSOs.





About 160
representatives of CSOs
from Vlora, Fieri,
Saranda, Lushnja,
Patosi, Berati,
Kuçova,Vajgurore
Bridge, Elbasan and
Tirana participated in
regional trainings and

increased their knowledge on the topics of: "Using online collaboration platforms", "Fundraising and Revenue Generation", "Advocacy and Lobbying "and" How to tell your story through online creative-Storytelling tools".

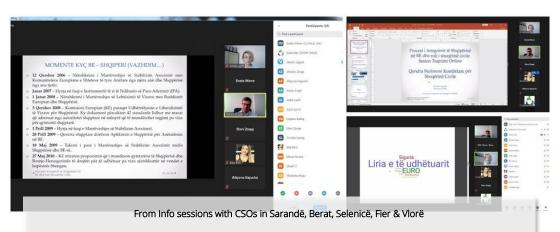


Info sessions with CSOs on the EU accession process

<u>European Movement in Albania (EMA)</u> as one of the implementing partners of the project and within the capacity building component organized a series of information sessions on European Integration in Saranda, Berat, Selenice, Fier, Vlora, Tropoja, Malësia e Madhe, Durrës, Kavaja and Kruja during this months.

About 40 representatives from civil society organizations and local actors joined in the information sessions to be informed about the history and key moments of the process of Albania's EU Integration, the stages of the process and what is Albanian state of negotiations compared to other countries in the region, and negotiating structures and opportunities for greater involvement and engagement of civil society in this process.

These sessions are a continuation of a series of activities organized by EMA in cooperation with the Center, in order to increase knowledge and recognition of participatory and contributing processes in the country's EU membership process.





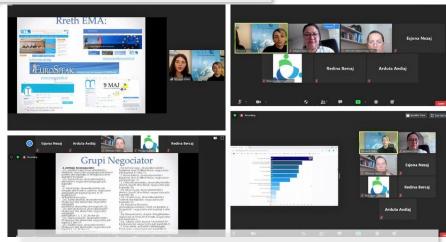
12 Info Sessions



105 Representative



12 Districts



From Info sessions with CSOs in Tropojë & Malësinë e Madhe.





New members elected to the National Council for Civil Society (NSCC)

Following the call for proposals of candidates for civil society members in the National Council for Civil Society (NSCC), the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), in the role of NCSC Technical Secretariat in September, announced the list of four elected members by civil society organizations. New members of NSCC are:

For the scope of action A: "Democratization, rule of law, human rights and EU integration"

- Dritan Sakuta Youth for Integration, Activation and Awareness (RIAS)
- Armando Bala New Vision 2016 / New Vision Organization

For the scope of action B "Economic-territorial-environmental development "

 Ermelinda Mahmutaj - Environmental Center for Development, Education and Networking (EDEN)

For the scope of action C: "Improving welfare, social services, health care and quality of life "

Andi Rabiaj - Network of Organizations "Voice of Youth"

Statement by a group of civil society organizations on the draft laws of the Anti-Defamation Package

Following the announcement of the return of the so-called Anti-Defamation Legal Package by the President for consideration in parliament, fifteen organizations of civil society through an open letter, have called on the Albanian Parliament to resume the process from scratch so that an initiative of such a law should be undertaken only after the observance of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and international standards on freedom of expression. CSOs submit to consider and address the issues raised in the opinion of the Venice Commission on this issue as well as the involvement of civil society and media representatives in the process.

We bring once again to the attention of the sector that the Albanian Parliament approved in December last year amid protests by citizens and activists of human rights a law that creates an administrative control over the content of online media.

For more read the Statement of CSOs and Opinion of the Venice Commission

Update announcement on e-filing of taxpayers' address data



Tax Administration, based on Law no. 9920 dated 19.05,2008 "On Tax Procedures", amended, article 23, point 1, as well as Law no. 87/2019 "For the invoice and the system of turnover monitoring ", requires from every taxpayer entity that within November 1st, 2020 provide detailed information regarding each address or place of business registered. Failure to provide this information is considered an administrative offense.

Read more about the procedure here

Civil society organizations support employee strikers in Ballsh Refinery

Through an open letter addressed to the Prime Minister and other state institutions, the organizations request that the employees of the Ballsh Refinery are respected and protected, their claims are heard and Immediate measures are taken to resolve the claims. Read more about the letter



PROCES I ZGJEDHJEVE

për katër anëtarë të rinj nga shoqëria civile për Këshillin Kombëtar për Shoqërinë Civile

Për më shumë informacion:





For the manner of creation, organization and functioning of the Agency

National Youth (AKR) on September 2nd, 2020, on the proposal of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the Council of Ministers was approved the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Youth Agency (AKR). AKR Mission is the guarantee of protection and the promotion of the rights of young people, through support for non-formal education, interaction and activation of youth and financing of youth activities, in implementation of state policies in the field of youth. Read more

Meeting of the National Council for European Integration (NCIE)



On September 24, 2020, the National Council for European Integration (NCEI) held its virtual meeting for the progress made and the challenges within the political criteria and chapter 23 'The judiciary and human rights ", with a focus on the 15 points of the decision of the Council of the European Union of 25 March 2020 for the opening of negotiations.

The meeting was greeted by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Council, Mrs. Rudina Hajdari and Mr. Taulant Balla. To inform KKIE members and guests regarding the progress made within chapter 23 and the challenges of the future was invited the Ministry of Justice, Mrs. Etilda Gjonaj.

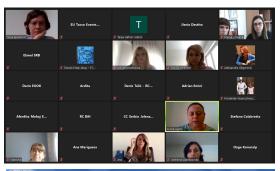
After the presentations on the topic of the meeting, discussions, comments and suggestions from the leaders followed of independent institutions



and members of the National Integration Council. Part of the discussions of roundtable were also made Mrs. Erinda Ballanca, People's Advocate; Mrs. Ilda Zhulali, advisor of The Presidency of the Republic and Mrs. Erida Skendaj from the Helsinki Committee who in her speech addressed to the Council concerns about the new draft law on the registration of organizations non-profit, on behalf of the grouping of organizations that have reacted to this issue. "Although in In the short term, civil society organizations were involved in the consultation process from the Ministry of Justice, but so far, we have no official reaction, to reflect the comments and our suggestions, especially principled ones. The process has already been channeled into the procedure We hope that the consultation of this project by the responsible parliamentary bodies will take place effective and reasonable in terms of time ".

Mrs. Vasilika Hysi, Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, in her speech also focused on the importance of some other mechanisms in the Assembly, responsible for reviewing the recommendations made for the opening of negotiations and monitoring their progress. Read more about the meeting

Coordination meeting between TACSO 3 and National Resource Centres for Civil Society Development in Western Balkans and Turkey







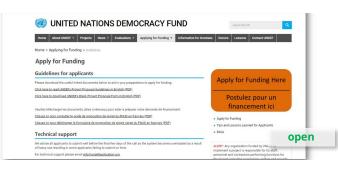
September the second virtual meeting was organized to share and information coordinate the activities between the TACSO 3 Program and the National Resource Centers of Civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey, both programs supported

European Union.

The meeting was attended by 22 representatives of National Civil Society Resource Centres in these countries, representatives of EU Delegations, senior representatives from DG NEAR and the TACSO 3 team.

As part of the meeting, the following activities of Tacso 3 and Resource Centers were discussed in the countries of the region, the P2P program, the creation of a database for projects and under Civil Society Facility (CSF) grants as well as for the role of Resource Centers in development and process consulting for Guide to support of European Union-to share civil Society in the countries of expansion, 2021-2027. Read more





















Deadline: 11 September 2020
Apply on: regionalhub@balkancsd.net













QUARTERLY CALENDAR

Mark your calendar! Be involved in our upcoming events!

October 2020						
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November 2020							
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December 2020							
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27	28	29	30				

NPO Academy

Trainings & Seminars for CSOs

Networking Events

Public F

Public Forums and Events

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