Tirana, 21 February 2025

**OPEN LETTER**

**To:** Ms. Albana Koçiu,  Minister of Health and Social Protection

# **Subject:** On the Assessment of the Roadmap for Government Policy Towards an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2019–2023 and the Drafting of the Roadmap for the period 2024–2027.

Honorable Ms. Koçiu,

We are writing to express our interest and request information regarding the assessment process of the Roadmap for Government Policy Towards an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2019–2023, as well as the drafting and finalization of the Roadmap for the 2024–2027 period.

The creation of an enabling environment for civil society organizations is a fundamental prerequisite and a key measure for ensuring a sustainable democracy in any country. Since 2015, through the Roadmap for Government Policy Towards an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, the Albanian Government has expressed its commitment to fostering a supportive environment for civil society. This document, approved every four years, aims to establish the necessary instruments and institutional infrastructure for an institutionalized dialogue and cooperation between the Government and Civil Society.

In 2024, at the request of the Government of Albania and with the assistance of the Delegation of the European Union to Albania and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), the process of evaluating the achievements and outcomes of the 2019–2023 Roadmap commenced. The results of this assessment were intended to serve as the foundation for drafting the next strategic document for 2024–2027[[1]](#footnote-1).

Preliminary findings from this assessment were presented during a meeting held in June[[2]](#footnote-2) 2024 at the premises of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, with the participation of members of the National Council for Civil Society, representatives of the EU Delegation to Albania, national and international experts from civil society, as well as representatives from the Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organizations in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

To date, this meeting remains the only public development regarding the assessment of the 2019–2023 Roadmap. Although the finalization of findings and the drafting of the 2024–2027 Roadmap were expected to be completed within 2024, as part of the Roadmap for the Functioning of Democratic Institutions[[3]](#footnote-3), no information or communication has been made public regarding the progress and outcomes of these processes.

The lack of public information and transparency concerning the assessment of the Roadmap reflects an ongoing concern identified in the European Commission's Annual Reports on Albania, as well as in the annual assessments conducted by Partners Albania through the Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development[[4]](#footnote-4).

We believe that this situation is, among other factors, influenced by the absence of a legally designated structure responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and publicly communicating the progress of the Roadmap.

Considering the above and recognizing the Ministry of Health and Social Protection's key role in this process, particularly as the leading institution of the National Council for Civil Society, we find it necessary to address the following key issues:

* First, we express our concern over the lack of public information and the exclusion of the non-profit sector from the processes related to the government's strategic document for civil society. Without a transparent and coordinated approach, there is a risk that civil society organizations will be left without a clear supportive framework, both strategically and financially. Therefore, it is essential to ensure open and inclusive communication regarding the assessment of the 2019–2023 Roadmap and the drafting of the 2024–2027 Roadmap, guaranteeing active civil society participation at all stages.
* Second, the drafting of the 2024–2027 Roadmap should include extensive consultations with civil society organizations from the outset. It should be based on clear and measurable priorities, actions, and indicators that align with the development of the CSO sector, national strategic documents, and Albania’s EU integration commitments.
* Third, the Government must demonstrate stronger political will and commitment in the drafting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Roadmap for Policy Development and Measures for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development. The level of institutional engagement in ensuring civil society participation and dialogue has been low. The establishment of a legally mandated and dedicated structure to oversee the implementation process of the Roadmap would contribute to transparency, accountability, and regular monitoring of progress. Such a structure should ensure a clear communication mechanism with civil society organizations, support inter-institutional cooperation, and enable continuous consultations to ensure that the priorities and measures defined in the Roadmap reflect the real needs of the sector. Additionally, this process must be accompanied by concrete institutional commitments to guarantee not only a more inclusive approach but also the necessary resources for the effective implementation of the planned measures.
* Fourth, public funding for supporting civil society organizations has historically been insufficient to meet the needs of the communities they serve. With the withdrawal of bilateral donors and the reduction of foreign aid, the financial sustainability challenge has increased, putting at risk the continuity of many non-profit services and their crucial role in the social, economic, and democratic development of the country. In this context, it is essential to strengthen institutional commitment through the Roadmap for Policy Development and Measures for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development and ensure sustainable financial resources through the state budget, guaranteeing long-term support for civil society organizations.

Hoping that our request will be taken into consideration, we look forward to your response.

For any further communication regarding this letter, the designated contact point on behalf of the group is the **National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania**, via **email:** **info@resourcecentre.al** or **telephone: +355 4 2254881**.

Respectfully,

List of Civil Society Organizations in alphabetical order

Acli Ipsia in Albania

Act for Society Center

Active Mobility

Albania Community Assist

Albanian Center for Family Development

Albanian Center for Population and Development (ACPD)

Albanian Center YMCA

Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF)

Albanian Local Capacity Development Foundation (ALCDF)

Aleanca Kundër Diskriminimit LGBT

ALTRI Center

All Together for the Integration of Roma

AMAD Center

Association "Useful to Albanian Woman"

Association “Xhubleta”

Association AKS

Association Beyond Barriers

Association Community Papa Xhovani XXIII

Association Hope for Us

Association Me the woman

Association Multifunctional for Culture, Education and Development

Association Peace Volunteering Network (PVN)

Association Ray of Hope

Association Together for Life

Aulona Center, Vlora

CELIM Albania

Center Agency “AJMMI” (Ionian Agency for Environment, Media and Information)

Center Edlira Haxhiymeri Shelter

Center ESN Tirana

Center for Education and Social Advancement

Center for Gender Justice in Albania

Center for Social Advocacy

Center Light Steps

Center Other Vision Elbasan

Center Progress and Development

Center With the Community for Change

Change and Development Center

Civil Rights Defenders, Albania

Consulting and Development Partners/ Arka Youth Center

COSV In Albania

Different and Equal

Durrësi Aktiv

Emanuel Mission Foundation

Environment for Development and Integration Center

Environmental Association Zharrëza

European Center for Legal Services, CELS

European Movement Albania

For the Benefit of the Community Organisation, Elbasan

Free Speech Forum

Gender Alliance for Development Centre (GADC)

Genesis Center

Hand to Hand Against Nation Apathy - H.A.N.A

he Association for the Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment

Horizon Again

Initiative for Social Change (ARSIS)

Institut for Social Contract

Institute of Romani Culture in Albania

JetaPlus

Jonathan Center

Joscelyn Foundation

National Association for Life – SHKEJ

Network Albania

North Green Association

Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA)

Partners Albania for Change and Development

Prosperity with Integrity Center

Qendra The Door

Resource Environmental Center – Albania (REC Albania)

Roma Active Albania

Science & Innovation for Development (SCiDEV)

Streha Center

Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS)

Together Foundation

The Albanian Women Empower Network—AWEN

The Association “Social Center for Helping People in Need” Fushë-Arrëz

The Association “Udhetimi i Lire- Liberi di Viaggiare“

Thinking Planning Acting Center (TPA)

Vatra Psycho-Social Centre

Voice of Roma In Albania

YMCA Shkodra

Young Professional Network

Youth Center Trokitje

Youth Movement for Democracy, Puka

Youth Peer

Youth Rights and Citizens Initiatives

Youth Voice Network

1. GDSI, 2023, “Support for the Government of Albania for the Evaluation of the “Road Map for the Government Policy towards a More Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2019 – 2023” Albania and Preparation of the new “Roadmap Covering 2024 – 2027” – Term of Reference. Available at: <https://gdsi.ie/evaluation-and-strategy-expert/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. AMSHC, 2024 “Presentation of the Preliminary Evaluation Report on the Roadmap for the Government Policy Towards a More Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2019 – 2023”. Available at: https://kkshc.gov.al/prezantimi-i-raportit-paraprak-te-vleresimit-per-udherrefyesin-per-politiken-e-qeverise-drejt-nje-mjedisi-me-mundesues-per-zhvillimin-e-shoqerise-civile-2019-2023/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Decision No. 311, dated 02.10.2024 "On the Approval of the Roadmap for the Functioning of Democratic Institutions" Available at: <https://amshc.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/vendim-2024-10-02-611.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Partners Albania 2013-2023, *“Monitoring Matrix on the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, Albania Report*", Available at**:** <https://www.partnersalbania.org/publication/monitoring-matrix-on-enabling-environment-for-civil-society-development-country-report-for-albania/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)