



EU Support to Civil Society

In the Western Balkans and Türkiye

#WesternBalkans #EUEnlargement

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An active civil society is a critical component of democratic systems and an important player in reform processes in the Western Balkans and Türkiye*. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can contribute to addressing many societal challenges, by engaging in policy debates, proposing innovative, sustainable and inclusive solutions and monitoring the results of reform processes. In this context, civil society plays a key role in the EU accession process, including promoting confidence building and good neighbourly relations.

Strategic vision of our support

European Commission’s Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027¹

The European Commission supports:



A **conducive environment** for Civil Society to carry out its activities

- Enabling legal and policy environment (freedoms of association, assembly, and expression)
- Enabling financial environment



Strengthened **cooperation and partnership** between CSOs and Public Institutions

- CSOs included in decision- and policy-making process and oversight
- strategic policy frameworks and mechanisms to support meaningful cooperation



Reinforced **CSO capacity and resilience** to carry out their activities effectively

- CSOs are capable, transparent and accountable
- CSOs’ work is vision-driven, strategic, and evidence based
- CSOs work with adequate financial and human resources

¹ The implementation of the guidelines is annually assessed. The baseline assessment is available [here](#).

The Civil Society Facility

The EU’s support to civil society is mainly channeled through the Civil Society Facility (CSF). The CSF offers a single point of access for support to civil society.

The overall objective of the CSF is to strengthen participatory democracies and EU integration in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, through an enhanced contribution by civil society.

* This factsheet refers to EU support to civil society in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, but the EU also supports civil society in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia

In numbers



disbursed in 2014-2020

€337 million

€350.9 million

allocated for 2021-2027



Key regional initiatives

Action grants with the EUROPEAN ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (EED)

The aim of these actions is to contribute to sustainable democratisation, enabling a pluralistic, independent civic society, and media environment, while providing flexible sub-granting for pro-democracy support.



EU National Resource Centres (NRCs)

Provide support to CSOs at the local and national level, focusing on organizational development, networking, and information sharing, while strengthening the role of CSO's in the EU integration process.



Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans (ReLOaD)

Started in 2017, the programme (implemented by the United Nations Development Programme – UNDP) is currently in its second phase and aims to strengthen partnerships between local governments and civil society, enhance transparency in CSO funding and promote youth and civic engagement in decision-making.



Support to the promotion of Civil Society regional actions in the Western Balkans” with the WESTERN BALKANS FUND (WBF)

Supports the development of regional grant schemes for CSOs to address key regional challenges, strengthen CSO capacities for fund absorption, and foster regional cooperation.

Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (TACSO)

Improves CSO capacities and stimulates an environment for civil society and pluralistic media development, while assisting the Commission in assessing the civil society sector.



SUPPORT TO REGIONAL NETWORKS

Through regular calls for proposals, the EU supports regional CSO network active in various thematic areas, such as Rule of Law and Anti-corruption, Human Rights and Social Inclusion and the Green Agenda. Examples of specific CSO projects include:



€1.1
million

Romani women POWER OF CHANGE in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Aims to empower Romani women by increasing their participation in policy and decision-making for Roma integration, social inclusion, and non-discrimination.



€1.4
million

Integrity watch in the Western Balkans and Turkey, civil society combating corruption with political integrity data

Empowers citizens and CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye to hold political leadership accountable for the integrity of political finance, lawmaking, and resource allocation.



€1.3
million

Regional Youth Dialogue for Europe, RYDE

Enhances the impact of CSOs and youth organizations in promoting democratic values and the benefits of EU integration in the Western Balkans.



€1.2
million

EICEE – Western Balkan Eco Innovation and Circular economy Ecosystem

Strengthens CSO capacities in policy development for a green and digital transition in the Western Balkans, promoting a sustainable, balanced economic recovery.



Examples of bilateral projects include:

Albania

Rural Albanian Youth (RURAL-YOU)

Aims at enhancing youth participation in the social, economic, and political life of rural and remote communities of north-eastern Albania.

€0.9
million



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Strengthening local participation and cooperation through partnership of Public Authorities and CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina- LINK 4 Cooperation

Empowers the capacities of local authorities (elected leaders and civil servants) and civil society in implementing participative processes.

€0.5
million



€0.3
million

Kosovo

Kosovo Youth Participation (KYP) Project

Aims at increasing the participation and employability of disadvantaged youth in decision making, in local communities and on the central level.

Montenegro

M'Base : CSOs Montenegro - from basic services to policy shapers

Contributes to the recognition by state institutions of an empowered civil society that actively shapes the EU integration process in Montenegro.



North Macedonia

Through gender lenses: appraising budgets and policies, watchdogging local action plans for gender equality implementation

Through structured networking and cooperation with local governments, the project aims at shaping local policies and budgets to respond to needs of women and men.



Serbia

Green Incubator - Developing competent civil society to support implementation of EU environmental Acquis

Aims at strengthening capacities and increase effectiveness of CSOs in Serbia for addressing environmental and socio-economic challenges.



Türkiye

CultureCIVIC “Promoting tolerance, dialogue and freedom of expression”

Supports projects and individuals that encourage cultural dialogue and public engagement, tolerance, freedom of speech, non-discrimination, social cohesion, individual freedoms and democratic processes.