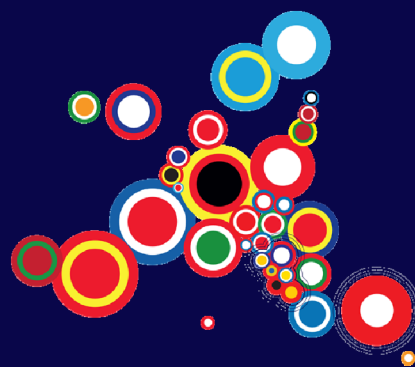




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

SERBIA Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019



Action summary

In line with the European Commission "Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020", the action will focus on the development of a mechanism in Serbia for permanent dialogue with civil society in the area of the European Union (EU) negotiation process. Support in the form of long term grants, including re-granting to reach the local grassroots level, will be provided to increase capacities and effectiveness of the Serbian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to address reform processes, among others in areas relevant to rule of law, environmental protection, socio-economic development at the local level. In addition support will be provided for participation of CSOs in the negotiation process through capacity building, increasing local CSOs/citizens participation in the process, as well as communication with citizens.

In line with the European Commission "Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries 2014-2020", the action aims at strengthening the freedom of expression and investigative reporting. Support in the form of long term grants will be provided for public interest media productions, among others in the areas of the areas of rule of law, environmental protection and EU integration process. The policy development and monitoring of media freedoms will also be in focus of the programme.

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019
Action Title	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Serbia
Action ID	IPA 2018/040-646.07/CSF & Media/Serbia IPA 2019/040-647.07/CSF & Media/Serbia
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	Regional and territorial cooperation
DAC Sector	15150 Democratic participation and civil society 15153 Media and free flow of information
Budget	
Total cost	IPA 2018: EUR 5 400 000 IPA 2019: EUR 5 485 000 Total: EUR 10 860 000
EU contribution	IPA 2018: EUR 5 000 000 IPA 2019: EUR 5 000 000 Total: EUR 10 000 000
Budget line(s)	22.020401 – Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	Direct and indirect
<i>Direct management:</i> EU Delegation <i>Indirect management:</i> National authority or other entrusted entity	Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Implementation responsibilities	N/A
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Republic of Serbia
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A
Timeline	
Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary	N/A
Final date for concluding delegation agreements	N/A

under indirect management			
Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts	IPA 2018: 31 December 2019 IPA 2019 : 31 December 2020		
Indicative operational implementation period	72 months from the adoption of this Financing Decision		
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)	N/A		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Civil Society

European Union (EU) support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) aims at building stronger democracies, improving accountability systems and ultimately achieving better policy and economic and social development. It seeks to empower civil society to fulfil the following key roles:

- Creating stronger links to citizens by engaging in public policy processes, reaching out to society as a whole including marginalized groups and grass-root communities and encouraging civic activism and public participation in policy-making across all areas;
- Becoming professional and reliable partners in the policy-making and reform process through evidence-based advocacy sectors and close monitoring of reforms across all sectors;
- Contributing to enhancing responsible and inclusive leadership in the political, economic and social spheres and provide early warning in case of societal change,
- Strengthening economic development and create better links with business by promoting entrepreneurship, social innovation and job creation.

The Enlargement Strategy "*A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans*"¹ (Western Balkan Strategy) underlines the importance of an enabling environment for civil society organisations. The European Commission calls Governments to ensure stakeholders can actively participate in the reform and policy making process, for example by establishing inclusive structured dialogues on reform priorities with the involvement of an empowered civil society.²

The Serbia 2018 Report³ assessed that no progress was made towards establishing an enabling environment for the development and financing of civil society. CSOs and human rights defenders play a key role in raising awareness about civil and political rights in a climate not open to criticism, with negative statements made by government officials and echoed by the media on civil society in general and on funding of certain associations in particular. The legislation and policy framework regarding CSOs is fully implemented in regards to freedom of association. However, there are gaps in adoption of secondary legislation in particular when it comes to access of CSOs to public funding. Most of Serbian CSOs are continuously facing financial instability, due to the lack of systematic legal framework for public spending to CSOs. The criteria for support of CSOs are not clearly defined, in particular at the local level, to ensure the overall transparency of the process.

¹ COM(2018) 65 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/strategy-western-balkans-2018-feb-06_en

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-serbia-report.pdf>

The relationship between the government and CSOs is still marked by fragmented cooperation and a selective approach towards individual CSOs. Further efforts are needed to ensure systematic cooperation between the government and civil society. The Guidelines for inclusion of civil society organizations in the regulation adoption process were adopted in August 2014 by the Government of Serbia, but it didn't bring more systematic mechanism for the participation of the CSOs in decision making process. At the moment there are no available data on a number of draft laws being consulted with civil society. Increased number of laws passed in urgent procedure is affecting democratic debate in the society, as well as effective inclusion of civil society in consultation process in public policies.

The Office for cooperation with civil society provides the institutional framework for more structured cooperation between the Government and CSOs. The Office continued with initiatives aimed at improving involvement of civil sector in consultation process and at enhancing the legal, financial and institutional framework for the development of civil society. During 2017, the Government Office for cooperation with civil society made efforts in preparing and negotiating positive changes of the Government Regulation on public funding. Following CSOs consultations organised by the Office for cooperation with civil society, amendments to the regulation on public funding to CSOs were adopted, aiming to harmonise the internal legal acts regulating public CSOs funding and increase transparency, monitoring and evaluation of the overall process. However, the National Strategy for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society is still pending since 2015. This document is a stepping stone for creating better national legal and financial frameworks for sustainable development of civil society, and its fruitful cooperation with state institutions. The Strategy aims at giving citizens a stronger voice in influencing public sector reform processes in the context of accession to the EU.

Cooperation between civil society and parliament in the area of EU negotiations has improved, notably through the National Convention on European Union, as evidenced in the public consultations on Chapters 23 and 24. Guidelines for Cooperation between the core negotiating team, representatives of civil society organisations, the National Convention and the Chamber of Commerce were adopted in April 2016, aiming at improving the level of inclusion of civil society in the process of EU negotiations.

Civil society's public image in Serbia is deteriorating. There is a low level of citizens' confidence in civil society organizations, with high number of citizens not perceiving CSOs to solve the biggest problems which affect the everyday lives of citizens. There are negative campaigns directed towards civil society in general by the ruling party officials and statements regarding the funding of certain associations.

CSOs related challenges to be addressed with this programme are strengthening the role of CSOs in the EU accession process, further development of institutional mechanisms for consultations and cooperation between the Government and CSOs on all levels and support participation of the civil society in public reforms processes. The thematic areas for CSOs initiatives among others will be environmental protection, sector with strong need for capacity building and advocacy due to environmental impact as a result of human activity and slow progress in harmonisation with the EU *acquis*. At the local level the CSOs support will furthermore focus on grassroots activities to enhance active citizenship, service to the people and local sustainable development.

Media

The Serbia 2018 Report assessed the lack of progress concerning freedom of expression in Serbia and the overall environment is still not conducive to the exercise of this right. Cases of threats, intimidation and violence against journalists are still a concern, while investigations and final convictions remain rare.

The 2017 World Press Freedom Index⁴ published by the Reporters without borders, shows that media freedoms in the country have declined. There is a drop in the ranking of Serbia from 59 in 2016 to 66 position out of 180 countries in 2017.

The media content in Serbia continued to deteriorate in quality and there is a noticeable lack of media content of public interest. The economic crisis in Serbia has led to the reduction of the financial resources for stable operating of the media in particular in regards to advertising budgets for media. This further increased the pressure on professional journalism in the country and has led to lack of important stories in particular those that relate to the rule of law. The overall media environment resulted in widespread self-censorship and hate speech is often tolerated in the media.

The Press Council is an independent, self-regulatory body that brings together publishers, owners of print and online media, news agencies and media professionals. It was established to monitor the compliance of the Journalist's Code of Ethics of Serbia, solving complaints made by individuals and institutions related to content of print and online media. The Press Council is also authorised to mediate between aggrieved individuals, institutions and editorial staff, and the pronouncement of public warnings in such cases when determined that the violation of ethical standards defined by the Journalist Code of Ethics has occurred. In the third consecutive year of print media monitoring, the Press Council has recorded an increase of breaches of the Journalistic Code of Professional Conduct in print media (approximately 7 % rise in 2017). The most frequent offenses were violations of the presumption of innocence, invasion of privacy, presentation of assumptions without stating the source and facts.

The adoption of a new strategy for the development of a public information system through inclusive consultation with stakeholders is still pending. The Ministry of Culture and Information formed a Working group for drafting a new media strategy and related action plan which is to replace the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia by 2016. The current Media strategy and related media laws adopted in August 2014, has not yet been fully implemented, in particular in regards to privatisation of the media, transparent co-financing of the media outlets and independence of the Regulatory authority for electronic media (REM).

The Regulatory body for electronic media is in delay of adoption of the new Strategy for Development of Radio Media Service and Audiovisual Media Services in the Republic of Serbia in line with law on Electronic Media. The regulator continues to lack independence in monitoring broadcasters to ensure they meet their programming obligations. Current temporary solutions in funding of the public broadcasting services caused uncertainty about the stable financing of Radio Television Serbia (RTS) and Radio Television Vojvodina (RTV) and their editorial independence.

Responding to requirements introduced by the Action Plan for Chapter 23 in the area of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media, the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office, the Serbian Ministry of Interior and journalists and media associations' representatives signed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2016. As a consequence, there has been some progress in communication between the journalists and state institutions, but it is yet to lead to greater security for journalists and more efficient legal treatment of cases and access to justice.

In order to move the media reform process forward, there is a need for cooperation between media industry, civil society sector, professional organisations and academia to work on further policy development, implementation and monitoring. Despite permanent efforts to ensure transparency and

⁴ <https://rsf.org/en/serbia>

inclusiveness in the policy and legislation developing processes, the implementation of the Media Strategy indicates to a very slow pace of progress in this field.

In 2016, the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission to Serbia and the EU Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO), with the support of the Delegation of the European Union in Serbia, co-organised the Serbian “Speak up! Follow-up” conference on media policy in order to compensate for the lack of any evaluation of the 2011 Media Strategy. Recommendations on the economic sustainability of media, use of new technology in journalism, creation of digital information space, state of legislation, self-regulation, media freedom and responsibility were collected from numerous stakeholders and were delivered to the Ministry of Culture and Information as input for the new Media Strategy. These recommendations stressed the need for the adjustments that the Programme aims to address.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

The programme aims at supporting civil society and the media sector in Serbia in line with DG Enlargement guidelines for the EU support to civil society in enlargement countries for the period 2014-2020⁵ and the Guidelines to support media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries for the period 2014-2020⁶.

The support to civil society will focus on the development of mechanisms for permanent dialogue with civil society in the area of the EU negotiation process, as well as building the capacities and effectiveness of Serbian CSOs to address reform processes, among others in areas relevant to rule of law, environmental protection, socio-economic development at the local level, etc. Capacity building will be supported through long term grants, including financial support to third parties in order to reach the local grassroots level. In addition, support will be provided for the participation of CSOs in the negotiation process and to facilitate collaboration between state actors and non-state actors related to evidence-based policy dialogue in reform processes.

In the area of support to media freedom and media integrity, the programme aims at strengthening the freedom of expression and investigative reporting. Support in the form of long term grants will be provided for public interest media productions, among others in the area of the area of rule of law, environmental protection, the EU integration process, etc. The policy development and monitoring of media freedoms will also be in focus of the programme to increase the safety of journalists and freedom of the media.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia⁷ underlines that reforms in the rule of law and fundamental rights sector are a key priority for Serbia, in line with the accession negotiation framework, which incorporates the new approach to the accession negotiations and puts the Rule of Law chapters at the heart of the enlargement process. The horizontal support to civil society and media is seen as one of priorities to improve democracy and rule of law and to contribute to deepening citizens' understanding of the reforms a country needs to complete in order to qualify for EU membership. This can help ensure EU accession is not just a government exercise and stimulate a balanced public debate, which is crucial to achieving a well-informed decision on EU membership at the end of the accession process.

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/civil_society/doc_guidelines_cs_support.pdf

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/elarg-guidelines-for-media-freedom-and-integrity_210214.pdf

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140919-csp-serbia.pdf

The guidelines for the EU support to civil society in enlargement countries for the period 2014-2020 includes a set of objectives, results and indicators for the EU support to civil society which will allow for the measurement of progress at country level as well across the enlargement region.

Support to civil society is reflected in two main goals: achieving an environment that is conducive to civil society activities and building the capacity of CSOs to be effective and accountable independent actors. The civil society facility (CSF) financial assistance from both multi-country and national IPA envelopes will include: aiming for longer term contracts, recognising that capacity building and advocacy work requires time and resources; support to foster partnership and coalition building; and doing more to reach out to grass-root organisations, in particular through re-granting and flexible support mechanisms to respond to their immediate needs.

With the aim to review challenges in the field of freedom of expression in the Enlargement countries and to elaborate adequate policy responses to it, the European Commission decided to make use of the full potential of accession negotiations in order to make progress on freedom of expression related issues. Particularly Chapter 23, Chapter 10 and others as far as they touch on subjects having an impact on the media sector and the related action plan, should properly cover the field. To this end, the European Commission developed the Guidelines to support media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries, a long term (2014-2020) assistance approach which will be supported by a results' framework to back achieving the political goals in the fields of freedom of expression and integrity of media.

This strategic approach is also pursued by financial and technical assistance through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance that will address three overarching areas: the enabling environment for free expression and media; strengthening journalists' and media professionals' organisations as the key drivers of the needed change; helping media outlets improve their internal governance, thus making them more resilient against external pressures and restoring audience's confidence in them.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission (DG NEAR) conducted The Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey covering CSF portfolio 2011-2016⁸. The aim was to assess the performance of financial assistance in achieving its objectives, in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency as well as impact and sustainability.

The country report for Serbia concluded that CSF financial assistance is relevant with regards to strengthening the enabling environment for civil society and for addressing the capacity-development needs of CSOs, for them to take a more active role in policy processes. In addition, the themes of the Call for proposals, particularly supporting good governance, media and freedom of expression, social inclusion and reconciliation, have been relevant to the context of Serbia. CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations in Serbia through re-granting and support to networks, although the size of re-granting components, and a lack of a focus with this instrument constrains assistance to grassroots and community-based organisations, as they are not able to access funds directly, but only through intermediary organisations. There is an apparent emphasis on provision of support to organisations in the capital.

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society and public administration has contributed to improvements in the legislative and regulatory framework necessary for civil society development in Serbia, as a part of

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/monitoring-and-evaluation_en

the overall legislative and public administration reforms. However, the outcomes of this support have not materialised through pending approval and implementation of the strategy for cooperation since 2015, which diminishes the results of improved nature of the relationship between civil society and the Government today.

CSF support has been an important investment for better recognition of the role of civil society and its professionalisation, and has also improved mechanisms for consultations with civil society. CSF grant support enabled organisations to take advantage of the improved system for consultations in legislative/policy drafting, by offering their inputs in the process for model laws, inputs and comments to policies and legislation and also support to oversight and monitoring of their implementation. CSF impacts are strongly dependent on the extent to which the institutional environment, for support to civil society continues to be institutionalised.

Furthermore, evidence indicates that civil society should not be supported in isolation, but as an integral part of every policy area. Civil society should therefore be regarded as cross-cutting issue and not as separate sector. In Serbia the EU is applying this approach through Sector Working Groups (SWGs) in order to achieve an efficient and coordinated process of programming and monitoring of international development assistance, especially IPA funds, as well as to provide the basis for the implementation of sector approach. SWGs gather national institutions, authorities and stakeholders, donor institutions, IFIs and civil society organisations working or having an active interest in the respective sector. The sectors are divided along the sectors of the Indicative strategy paper for Serbia.

The National IPA coordinator (NIPAC), which is the Ministry of European Integrations, established a consultation mechanism with the CSOs. This mechanism is based on the consultative process with Sectorial Civil Society Organisations (SECOs) and serves as a platform which enables exchange of information and contribution of CSOs in relation to programming and monitoring of the international assistance including IPA. Members of SECO participate in SWG meetings based on the needs and requirements and take part in consultation processes. Additionally, the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society plays an important role in creating an enabling environment for the participation of civil society in the legislative process.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in Serbia by empowering civil society to actively take part in decision making and by stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society and pluralistic media.	Quality assessment of existing legislation and policy framework Quality of structures and mechanisms in place for cooperation between CSOs/media and public Institutions	Independent assessments by International Organisations (I.O) and CSOs European Commission country report	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society and public institutions work in partnership through dialogue and cooperation based on trust and mutual acknowledgment of common interests Legal, regulatory and policy environment for freedom of expression and media and media integrity is improved 	Mechanism for permanent dialogue with civil society developed and operational Media legislation harmonised in line with EU standards and Audio-visual Media Services Directive (AVMS) Directive	Independent assessments by I.O. and CSOs TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support civil society and media freedoms European Commission country report on Chapters 23 and 10	Political stability and EU accession process continued;
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Results to Objective 1: 1.1. Public institutions recognise the importance of CSOs in improving good governance through CSO inclusion in decision-making processes (R3.1) 1.2. Increased capacities of the Serbian CSOs to address reform processes and EU integration process Results to Objective 2: 2.1. Increased safety standards for journalists and capacities of journalists' and professional associations and media, to exercise full freedom of expression 2.2. Improved conditions for quality investigative journalism including modern/innovative approaches to increase quality and credibility of investigative journalism and creative production.	Result 1 1.1. Quality of structures and mechanisms in place for dialogue and cooperation between CSOs and public institutions 1.2. Public perception of importance and impact of CSOs activities (GI 4.2.a) Result 2 2.1. Actions undertaken by authorities and media aimed at promoting free expression and media pluralism. 2.2. Media attention paid to the relevant issue/topic (=amount of coverage)	Result 1 Independent assessments by I.O. and CSOs General population survey Annual country report TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support civil society and media freedom Technical Assistance (TA) reports on monitoring grants impact Result 2 OSCE media reports TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support media freedoms European Commission country report on Chapters 23 and 10	National CSOs Strategy is adopted Government remains committed to develop and improve legal and strategic framework for development of the media in line with new Media Strategy Civil Society and media are responsive to the programme opportunities

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The programme aims at supporting civil society and media sector in Serbia in line with EU enlargement guidelines to support civil society and media freedom in Serbia. The proposed action will be coordinated with regional Civil Society and Media Programme initiatives to secure synergies of the overall assistance in the sectors.

Activities to achieve Results to Objective 1:

Activity 1.1. Strengthening policy dialogue in reform processes

Support to interaction and collaboration between state actors, institutional mechanisms and non-state actors (civil society, think tanks, social partners, media, researchers, etc.) related to evidence-based policy dialogue in reform processes and capacity development in areas related to public policy formulation, policy budgeting, implementation and monitoring.

Activity 1.2. Support to Civil Society capacities

Support to civil society organisations to increase capacities of the Serbian CSOs to address reform processes and EU integration process, among others in area relevant to rule of law, environmental protection and socio-economic development at the local level. Support to third parties is foreseen to reach the grassroots level.

Activity 1.3 Support to the National Convention on European Union

Support to the National Convention on European Union, as the unique institutional mechanism for participation of CSOs in the negotiation process. It will cover capacity building, advocacy to increase local CSOs/citizens participation in the process, as well as communication with citizens.

Activities to achieve Results to Objective 2:

Activity 2.1. Strengthening capacities of the Press Council

Support will be provided to strengthen capacities of the Serbian Press Council to actively promote professional and ethical standards in print and online media and to raise awareness of the importance of media self-regulation among media professionals. The action will be coordinated with the regional EU-funded project implemented by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) aimed at building capacities and regional cooperation of Press Councils in the Western Balkans.

Activity 2.2. Freedom of Expression and Quality Journalism in the Digital Environment in Serbia

In cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the assistance will focus on enabling environment for freedom of expression and increased safety standards for journalists, capacities of journalists' and professional associations and media, including those in minority languages.

Activity 2.3. Support to Media and Media Productions

Support to media and media productions through Call for Proposals, to strengthen the freedom of expression and investigative reporting. Support in the form of long term grants, will be provided for public interest media productions, among others in the area of the area of rule of law, environmental protection, the EU integration process, etc.

RISKS

Continued government commitment to the EU accession should remain unchanged, as well as political will to strengthen the cooperation mechanisms with civil society. Key stakeholders need to develop and improve the legal strategic and financial framework for the development of civil society and the Strategy for the Strategy for enabling environment for development of CSOs in Serbia needs to be adopted.

According to the Action plan for Chapter 23, the adoption of the new Media Strategy was planned by the end of 2017. This is now extended until December 2018. Some risks could be related to the lack of capacities among the CSOs and media to report / perform activities in the fields selected for support, such as environmental protection.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

All conditions necessary for successful implementation of the proposed action are in place.

The National Convention for European Union (NCEU) is an institutionalized consultative mechanism, part of the obligatory procedure on adoption of the Negotiating positions in the Committee for EU integration of the Parliament since 2014. It was recognized as a channel for informing the public on the negotiation process by the Government in August 2015 and is to be consulted in the development of the negotiation positions by Negotiating Team. In addition, Guidelines of the Negotiation team for cooperation with civil society define procedures for NCEU involvement and participation in all phases and regarding all relevant documents and policies in EU negotiation process.

The new Media Strategy that was initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Information will provide analysis of the current state of affairs in the media sector, implementation of the existing legislation and position of media and journalists. The results of these analysis and recommendations of the Working group will be basis for the implementation of the grant with the OSCE.

The National Strategy for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society has been drafted and is pending the adoption by the Government. Once adopted this document will secure consistent inclusion of civil society in decision-making process.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Main institutional stakeholders for the activities related to Results 1 will be National Convention of European Union, Parliament of Serbia, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society and public administration.

Main institutional stakeholders for the activities related to Results 2 will be Press Council and the Ministry of Culture and Information.

The beneficiaries will be directly responsible for the preparation and management of their actions. The regular Steering Committee meetings will be established for the partnership project with the OSCE Mission in Serbia.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD(S) AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING

The project will be implemented under Direct and Indirect Management mode.

The Contracting Authority shall be the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia for all activities planned under this programme.

Activity 1.1. Strengthening policy dialogue in reform processes. Call for Proposals.

Activity 1.2. Support to Civil Society capacities. Call for proposals.

Activity 1.3. Support to the National Convention on European Union. Grant. The grant will be signed with the National Convention on European Union in Serbia (NCEU) that represents civil society collaborative network established in 2014 by 17 prominent civil society organisations (CSO). The NCEU Secretariat is managed by the European Movement.

Activity 2.1. Strengthening capacities of the Press Council. Grant. The grant will be signed with Press Council as the only self-regulatory body in Serbia.

Activity 2.2. Freedom of Expression and Quality Journalism in the Digital Environment in Serbia. Contribution agreement with international organisation. Contribution Agreement..The agreement will be signed with the OSCE and will be implemented by the OSCE Mission in Serbia.

Activity 2.3. Support to Media and Media Productions. Call for proposals.

The envisaged assistance is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

In line with the IPA II Implementing Regulation 447/2014, an IPA II beneficiary who has been entrusted budget implementation tasks of IPA II assistance shall be responsible for conducting evaluations of the programmes it manages.

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines for evaluations. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules.

The "Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020" and the "Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries, 2014-2020" envisage monitoring and evaluation systems at different levels:

- CSOs and media will be involved for the yearly monitoring of indicators and results set in the Guidelines with the support of TACSO, Framework partnership agreements related to media sector, as well as international organisations. Annual national and regional meetings will analyse the development of the

sectors in all IPA II beneficiaries and the advancement towards the targets. The annual measurement of all indicators of the EU guidelines should provide the monitoring of specific objectives and results.

- A final evaluation should be commissioned at the end of the period (2020) to provide the necessary inputs for further support after the end of the current financial framework.

The monitoring framework of the grant scheme for civil society and media will be developed as a part of the larger framework mentioned above but also reflecting specifics of grants schemes that are limited in scope and time. Monitoring will be based on indicators developed for grant scheme and embedded in the very call for proposals. The impact of all actions undertaken by grantees will be measured after the end of the programme.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline 2015	Target 2020	Final Target 2023	Source of information
<p><u>Action outcome indicator for Specific objective 1:</u> Civil society and public institutions work in partnership through dialogue and cooperation based on trust and mutual acknowledgment of common interests</p> <p>-Mechanism for permanent dialogue with civil society developed and operational</p>	<p>28% of CSOs were consulted during the drafting specific laws, 30% of national strategies, 21% of national action plans, 11% on IPA funding</p>	<p>70% of strategic, legal and normative acts and IPA funding consulted with CSOs</p>	<p>100% of strategic, legal and normative acts and IPA funding consulted with CSO</p>	<p>Independent assessments by I.O. and CSOs</p> <p>TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support civil society and media freedoms</p> <p>European Commission country report on Chapters 23 and 10</p>
<p><u>Action outcome indicator Specific objective 2 :</u> - Legal, regulatory and policy environment for freedom of expression and media and media integrity is improved</p> <p>-Media legislation harmonised in line with EU standards and AVMS Directive</p>	<p>Laws adopted and implemented;</p> <p>New Media Strategy drafted.</p>	<p>70 % of the new Media Strategy Action plan implemented</p>	<p>100 % of the new Media Strategy Action plan implemented</p>	<p>Independent assessments by I.O. and CSOs</p> <p>TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support civil society and media freedoms</p> <p>European Commission country report on Chapters 23 and 10</p>
<p><u>Action outcome indicator Result 1:</u></p> <p>1.1. 1.1 Public institutions recognise the importance of CSOs in improving good governance through CSO inclusion in decision-making processes</p> <p>Quality of structures and mechanisms in place for dialogue and cooperation between CSOs and public institutions</p>	<p>On average, public debates are conducted for one in ten acts adopted or submitted to the Government (10.5% of the total number of acts).</p>	<p>Government CSOs strategy adopted and government / CSO consultation mechanism is put in place</p>	<p>CSOs strategy 70% implemented</p>	<p>Independent assessments by I.O. and CSOs</p> <p>European Commission country report</p> <p>The Office annual study on status of civil society</p>
<p><u>Action outcome indicator Result 1:</u></p> <p>1.2 Increased capacities of the Serbian CSOs to address reform processes and EU integration process</p> <p>Public perception of importance and impact of CSOs activities</p>	<p>34.5% of the general population believes that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) support is dealing with problems in their country</p>	<p>45% of the general population believes that NGOs support dealing with problems in their country</p>	<p>50% of the general population believes that NGOs support dealing with problems in their country</p>	<p>Independent assessments by I.O. and CSOs</p> <p>European Commission country report</p> <p>TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support civil society and media freedom</p>

				TA reports on monitoring grants impact
<p><u>Action outcome indicator Result 2:</u></p> <p>2.1. Increased safety standards for journalists and capacities of journalists' and professional associations and media, to exercise full freedom of expression</p> <p>Actions undertaken by authorities and media aimed at promoting free expression and media pluralism.</p>	Action plan for Chapter 23 section on Freedom of Expression	The obligations stipulated in Section 3.5 on Freedom of Expression of the Action Plan for Chapter 23 fully met	The obligations stipulated in Section 3.5 on Freedom of Expression of the Action Plan for Chapter 23	<p>OSCE media reports</p> <p>TACSO report on monitoring guidelines to support media freedoms</p> <p>European Commission country report on Chapters 23 and 10</p>
<p>Action outcome indicator Result 2:</p> <p>2.2. Improved conditions for quality investigative journalism including modern/innovative approaches to increase quality and credibility of investigative journalism and creative production.</p>	N/A Indicators will be developed by the each grant contract	N/A	N/A	TA grants monitoring reports

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

The work on the first national Strategy for enabling environment for development of CSOs and new changes of the Government Regulation on public funding regulation was marked with highly participatory consultation process involved both CSOs and the government which took place all over the country.

In order to enable more inclusive and transparent dialogue, consultation and communication with all relevant stakeholders in the field of planning and programming of EU funds and international development assistance, Ministry of European Integration established in 2011 a consultation mechanism with the civil society organisations (CSOs) - SECO mechanism. This mechanism is based on the consultative process with Sectorial Civil Society Organisations (SECOs) and serves as a platform that enables exchange of information and contribution of CSOs in relation to planning development assistance, particularly planning and programming of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, preparation of strategic documents such as the Need Assessment document for the period 2014-2020, Country Strategy Paper for the period 2014-2020 and Multi-country strategy paper for the period 2014-2020.

Members of SECO are participating at the Sector Working Group meetings based on the needs and requirements of each SWG meeting and they take part in consultation processes for analysing sector priority goals, measures and operations for financing from EU funds and international assistance.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Actual indicators on the position of men and women in Serbia show that equal rights do not necessarily imply equal status, with women at a disadvantage as compared to men. Women living in local and rural areas are one of the most disadvantaged groups in Serbia, regarding equal opportunities in all areas of public and private life, from participation in decision making, holding property rights, having access to finances and resources, social and other services. In addition, women and girls are more frequently and severely affected by various forms of gender-based violence than men and boys. Roma women in particular suffer from multiple vulnerability. Data shows that every second woman in Serbia has experienced some form of physical violence (46.1%), every third physical assault being from a family member (30.6%). The most common perpetrators of economic (50.6%), psychological (58%) and physical (71.7%) abuse were domestic partners, or the husband of the victim.

Progress has been made in harmonising legislation with the international and EU standards on gender equality, developing a comprehensive legal and policy framework, and increasing efforts to mainstream gender through all sectors at all levels. Major accomplishments have been done in 2016 by introducing gender sensitive budgeting as mandatory by a law for all budget users at all levels, to be gradually implemented by 2020; by starting the implementation of the Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 and the accompanied Action Plan 2016-2018. The Strategy highlights key national policies to reduce gender stereotypes and change some harmful cultural norms, as well as focusing on the development of new policies that will promote equal opportunities between women and men. This action will closely align with the provisions and measures of this strategy.

Different gender needs will be taken into account from day one in the implementation of this action. Namely, the Gender Analysis for Serbia will form the basis for further activities and the formulation of guidelines for calls for proposals will take into account the different needs of women and men in local communities, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas. Lower access to services and economic opportunities for

women in Serbia is also noted in strategic documents and reports, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) shadow report, policy brief on rural quality of life from a gender perspective. These documents call for intersectionality and close coordination at horizontal and vertical levels. The main obstacles, which shall be taken into account in implementation of the proposed actions, are related to the economic context that is not favourable to generating decent jobs, income production and accessible services; the lack of local ownership with respect gender equality and gender mainstreaming; lack of proper understanding of gender regime and patterns that perpetuate gender inequalities; lack of regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of legislation and policies; limited budgetary support; lack of sustainable gender equality mechanisms at all levels, including at national level that would serve as a strong authority to coordinate activities; lack of skilled and trained human resources; and lack of cooperation with CSOs that may provide relevant expertise.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal participation will be secured through appropriate information and publicity material, in the design of projects and accessibility to the opportunities they offer. Enforcement of those principles is likewise ensured through specific administrative procedures applied in accordance with the Law on non-discrimination. All further research and analyses will be conducted using gender-sensitive methodology. Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the project will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The calls for proposals will specify that CSOs which protect and promote the rights of these vulnerable groups will be in particular encouraged to apply. On the media front, the Code of ethics trainings will include these aspects in particular.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Equally, having in mind the demands of enlargement, and that the EU has increasingly articulated its aspiration to represent not only stability and prosperity, but also democratic values, articulated in Copenhagen political criteria for membership, the action, through its visibility and communication activities, shall spread the message that compliance with basic democratic standards is more than a condition for entry; it is a condition of membership. Involvement of minorities through the participation in the activities will be encouraged. In all activities during this project steps will be taken to ensure that the rights of minorities are taken into account.

Measures under the action are designed to support improvement of the quality of life of minority populations through strengthening main democratic principles, such as freedom of speech and expression. The application of the national policy and strategic documents and the best EU standards and practices in the promotion and protection of the rights of the minority and vulnerable groups will be ensured in all aspects of the preparation and implementation of this action.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

The civil society sector in Serbia was actively involved in the process of consultations regarding the guidelines to define the framework in line with specific needs of civil society sector in Serbia. In addition, the outline of the action has been developed in consultations with civil society, representatives of 26 CSOs, coalitions, governmental entities, the Ministry of European Integration, SECO sector working groups mechanism for the programming and monitoring of IPA, the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society and other donors.

Civil society organisations participated in the preparation of traffic lights report 2017 Serbia in line with EU guidelines, which was also the basis for the preparation of this action document.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

A positive impact on environmental protection is envisaged, through grant scheme to support policy dialogue between the government and civil society. The action will support strengthening of the civil society organisations to formulate action plans and to participate in the accession negotiations on relevant EU *acquis*.

Environment and climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0 million
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7. SUSTAINABILITY

Civil society organizations showed resilience in the times of recent economic crisis and their number significantly increased. Favourable legal framework and the Law on Associations adopted in 2009 contributed to this change. Most of the legal framework for effective operations of CSOs has been put in place, but challenges remain in several fields, and they still hamper the development of the sector in Serbia, in particular transparent financing of the sector from the state budget and institutionalised mechanism for participation of CSOs in policy dialogue. Streamlining of the legislation that fosters institutionalized participation of civil society organizations in public administration reform, EU negotiation and other policy making processes is also a target of this action. The horizontal change of the legislative framework in Serbia shall place CSOs in the centre of policy making in Serbia and ensure enduring change.

The financial support to CSOs will be at the heart of the action. This action shall stimulate operations of urban and rural, big and small CSOs throughout Serbia. Secondly, the targeted grant scheme of the new call for proposals will also contribute to independent and effective CSOs covering topics from the EU *acquis*.

The economic crisis in Serbia has led to the reduction of the resources for established journalists and media. This further increased the pressure on professional journalism in the country, and has led to likely bypassing of important stories in particular those that relate to the rule of law and EU *acquis* related issues. The issue of financial support to media as well as economic independence of media will be targeted by this action.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the EU Communication and Visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by DG NEAR and the EU Delegations in the field. The European Commission and the EU Delegations should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

The action will be implemented in close cooperation with EU Information centre in Serbia. The standard formats will be used in briefings, newsletters, press conferences, presentations, invitations, and signs, to highlight EU participation. The key tools of information and communication are:

- Media – press releases, press events, interviews
- Events – forums, information days, workshops, professional debates, seminars, conferences, project presentations, other regional events
- Publications – newsletters, brochures, leaflets, project information sheets, reports, studies, programme presentation summaries
- Publications Internet pages

Additional visibility will be provided through media grants for media productions and civil society grants in partnership with media.