

POLICY BRIEF

Security and energy sectors' cooperation with the civil society in Macedonia – friends or foes?



Introduction

The cooperation between civil society and state institutions is an important segment of the reforms the candidate countries have to undertake in order to comply with the EU accession criteria. Moreover, it is one of the crucial corrective roles civil society plays in democracies. The Republic of Macedonia, a candidate country for EU membership since 2005, has undertaken a number of reforms to improve its dialogue and cooperation with civil society. In this line, the Government created a Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society in 2007, succeeded by a new Strategy in 2012. However, experience shows that the implementation varies from ministry to ministry. Having in mind the capital-intensive profile of the energy sector and the legacy of the previous system applying to the security sector, both sectors do not have a tradition of transparency and openness. They also play an essential role in the country's national security. All of that is considered to be a justification for decisions to take place behind closed doors. Therefore, these sectors prove not to engage themselves actively into cooperation with civil society.

The aim of this policy paper is to assess the cooperativeness of the relevant institutions in the energy and security sector in Macedonia following the implementation of the benchmarks defined in the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society. Throughout the text, the energy sector is considered to be composed of the Ministry of Economy (Energy Department) and the Energy Agency while the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense represent the security sector.

There are different modes of cooperation envisaged by the Strategy, including consultations with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the policy making process, developing joint projects and organizing joint events, providing direct financial support for the CSOs, public-private partnerships etc. This paper focuses on the participation of civil society in the policy making process, as it can be considered as the most direct and advanced way of cooperation. This cooperation is very relevant for the EU integration process since it is part of the political criteria and it is important for Macedonia since the lack of cooperation between the civil society and the institutions especially in the energy and security sector has blocked many solutions offered by the civil society. The overall aim is to get a precise picture regarding the real cooperation of these "closed" sectors with the civil society and their will and capacities to engage themselves in such cooperation, thus drafting concrete recommendations for improving the situation directed both to the government and to civil society.

The paper will be structured in a way that first the relevant legal framework will be analyzed, after which the main barriers will be presented in a structured way based on the conducted field research. The paper will end with conclusions and recommendations.¹

Cooperation with civil society: common strategy – uneven implementation

The first strategy was created in 2007, covering the period 2007-2011.² By beginning with principles of mutual trust, partnership, participation and consultations, transparency, independency and accountability, there is a broad spectrum of activities envisaged by the Strategy including seven strategic goals:

- ✓ Improving the legal framework;
- ✓ Participation of CSOs in the policy making process;
- ✓ Realization of inter-institutional cooperation;
- ✓ Realization of inter-sectoral cooperation;
- ✓ Involving CSOs in the EU integration process;
- ✓ Creating favorable conditions for financial sustainability of the civil society;
- ✓ Continuous development of the civil society.

The Government created a CSOs Cooperation Unit within its General Secretariat³ in 2004 which was tasked in this Strategy for its coordination and implementation. A report that analyzed the implementation of the first Strategy showcased that the Strategy is being implemented with various degree of successfulness from activity to activity; one of the problematic areas highlighted was the lack of comprehensive participatory mechanism for including the civil society in the policy making processes. Also, on the list of ministries representing good examples of implementation of the Strategy are institutions which do not belong to the energy and security sector. Important is to mention that this report on the implementation of the Strategy was prepared with support of IPA funds from the EU,⁴ showing that the EU has recognized the importance of this cooperation.

¹ The methodology includes analysis of the relevant legal documents as the Strategy, reports analyzing the Strategy's implementation, a qualitative questionnaire for the relevant stakeholders by utilizing the Law on free access to public information, as well as interviews with these stakeholders and relevant CSOs.

² The cooperation between civil society and the Government was also subject of other initiatives as the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) methodology and the Open government partnership initiative.

³ The CSOs Cooperation Unit is a unit as part of the Department for analysis and coordination within the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

⁴ Emina Nuredinoska, Progress report on the implementation of the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society 2007-2011 for the period January 2007 – December 2010

The current *Strategy for cooperation of the Government with civil society 2012 – 2017* was prepared with broad inclusiveness and participation of representatives from CSOs and the CSOs cooperation Unit.⁵

The principles in the new Strategy remained the same updated with the principles of pluralism and equal opportunities and non-discrimination. However, the strategic goals show that the Strategy covers an even broader spectrum of activities, from having a sustainable civil society over socio-economic development to civic activism. When it comes to the involvement of CSOs in the policy making process as a strategic objective, the first strategy was very vague and mainly focused on changes in the legal framework and capacity building programs. One concern is however that the broadness of the spectrum envisaged in the new Strategy might hamper the implementation of specific measures. The current Strategy refers to more concrete mechanisms aimed to facilitate the CSOs' input in the policy making as the Single Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER) and e-democracy that enable on-line consultations, the former a tool as part of the RIA process which aims to list legal acts and draft legal acts enabling interested parties to submit comments to the draft legal acts. Furthermore, the Strategy also envisages involvement of the civil sector in all working bodies preparing the National Program for Adoption of the *acquis communautaire* (NPAA), raising awareness and promoting the possibilities for the CSOs to be involved, creating a database for participation of the CSOs in the consultative processes with ministries, continual monitoring of the implementation of the different mechanisms as well as following the Codex of good practices on the participation of the civil society in the policy making process. The Strategy's Action plan mentions the implementing stakeholders, but lacks a more concrete timeframe and budgetary expenditures, making the implementation of the Action Plan difficult to follow. However, in spirit of improving the civil society's influence in the policy making process, a Codex of good practices on the participation of the civil society in the policy making process was adopted, a document listing such good practices.

⁵ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, (2012), Report on the consultative meetings with CSOs upon the draft-Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society (2012-2017)

**Codex of good practices on the participation of the civil society in
the policy making process⁶**

Adopted in 2011

- ✓ Aims to increase the transparency and accountability of the work of the Government and the state bodies, to improve the cooperation of the Government with the civil sector and to improve the quality of the policy making process.
- ✓ Cooperation instruments: ENER, organizing joint conferences and trainings, forming joint working groups, preparations of policy papers, feasibility studies, regulatory impact assessment etc.
- ✓ CSOs Cooperation Unit to bridge the communication between the civil sector and the Government – it publishes an announcement on its website within seven days after receiving suggestion from a CSO and it publishes at its website the feedback from the respective institutions about the CSO's suggestion within 30 days after publishing the announcement.
- ✓ Areas of work: not concretely energy and security policies, although the mentioned areas as sustainable development, democracy and human rights overlap with the energy and security policies.

Identified challenges in the cooperation between energy and security sectors and civil society

Closedness of the security and energy sector

The security and energy sector are important factors for national security, as a result of which they do not come to mind naturally as areas in which the input of the civil society is sought. The Strategies and the Codex of good practices list various thematic areas of cooperation between the Government and CSOs among which more attention is given to social issues such as work with vulnerable groups, fighting poverty etc. which can be explained to be the areas that concern citizens more directly; as well as more general areas as protection of human rights and development of democracy. When it comes to influencing the law-making process, CSOs have been providing input to legislation in which dominate other issues than energy or security ones, such as the laws on associations and foundations, social protection, family, free access to public

⁶ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, (2011), Codex of good practices on the participation of the civil society in the policy making process

information; strategies on education, poverty, youth, drug control etc. This picture is complemented by a research on the participation of civil society organizations in the process of law adopting in Macedonia for the period March-October 2012 which showed the lack of cooperativeness and openness of the energy and security sector compared to other sectors. In fact, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Economy underperform with worst grades (2 out of 5, whereas 5 is the highest grade), while the Ministry of Defense received 3 in the area: general communication and support environment for including the civil society in the ministry's work; while both the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Interior received again the low grade 2 for the area: openness of the process of preparation of legal acts.⁷

On the questions which are the organizations the energy and security sector cooperate with, the institutions listed several organizations, among which dominate professional organizations and private companies. In more detail, the Ministry of Interior replied to cooperate with the Hunting Federation of Macedonia, Archery Club, National Arms Association, Private Security Companies and similar in the process of preparing draft laws,⁸; while the Ministry of Defense replied to cooperate with Association of Military and Police Veterans of Macedonia, Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia, Organization of Reserve Military Officers of Macedonia and others⁹. From a report on implementation of the Strategy, the Ministry of Interior lists organizations it cooperates with among which dominate organizations providing social services as work with victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, marginalized groups and similar; without giving precise information about the nature of the cooperation.¹⁰ The Ministry of Economy if asked as a whole, cooperates with private companies and chambers as start-up centres, business centres, handicraft chambers¹¹, giving the impression that the energy sector hides behind the other sectors of the Ministry. However, the Ministry of Economy's Energy Department replied to cooperate with CSOs working the area of energy and environment (mutual invitation to events, submitting draft legal acts to CSOs working in the energy area for opinion) and is satisfied with civil society's cooperativeness and input,¹² showing a slightly different picture of cooperation than the CSOs. Regarding the types of cooperation, the Ministry of Defense considers providing office space to be used by CSOs to be a cooperation activity, while the Ministry of Interior considers such activity to be answering CSOs' complaints. If analyzed the areas in which the Ministry of Economy mostly cooperates, it is evident that

⁷ Marija Szadevski, Simona Ognenovska, (2013), Public participation in Law-making processes, MCIC

⁸ Ministry of Interior, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013

⁹ Ministry of Defense, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June and July 2013

¹⁰ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, (2011), Report on the conducted measures and activities from the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society 2007-2011 in 2010

¹¹ Ministry of Economy, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013

¹² E-Mail interview with Ministry of Economy, conducted in July 2013

these areas are mainly industry, consumer protection, social accountability of companies and entrepreneurship.¹³

When the interviewed CSOs¹⁴ were asked about which institutions do they most successfully cooperate with, as cooperative institutions were often numbered institutions not belonging to the energy or security sector such as municipalities, some agencies or other ministries such as the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy or the Ministry of Agriculture. However, there were also interviewed CSOs that are very satisfied with their cooperation with the energy and security sector respectively. For instance, the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia says to have long-term institutionalized continuous cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, which is its event partner and patron. It adds: “We have direct cooperation with the institutions since our members are working in the security sector institutions.”¹⁵ Having members who are employees within the security sector institutions however significantly facilitates this CSO’s communication and cooperation with the security sector. Two of the interviewed CSOs working in the energy area replied to have excellent cooperation with either the Energy Agency or the Ministry of Economy; the Helsinki Committee was only satisfied with the Sector for Internal Control and Professional Standards within the Ministry of Interior. The interviewees listed also a number of bad examples of cooperation – difficulties to obtain information from the institutions; receiving an invitation at the day of the event, difficulties in getting the stakeholders to attend their events etc.

Beside concrete examples of more or less successful cooperation activities, it is important to see what the general patterns of successful cooperation are. Asked about the inclusion of the civil sector in the process of preparing the Energy Law of 2011 and the three energy strategies adopted in 2010, the Ministry of Economy answered that these documents were put on the website of the Ministry and submitted to the relevant stakeholders including CSOs working in the energy area asking for their opinion, all these stakeholders which were also invited to participate in a public debate. The draft Energy Law was also published on ENER.¹⁶ This

¹³ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, (2009, 2010, 2011, 2011), Reports on the conducted measures and activities from the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society 2007-2011 for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011

¹⁴ To get a better and balanced picture of how the Strategy is being implemented and how does the cooperation between the energy and security sectors and the civil society takes place, 11 interviews were conducted with different stakeholders: Energy Agency, Ministry of Economy; two large CSOs working on development of the civil sector in general – Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) and Center for Institutional Development (CIRa); two external experts involved in the Strategy drafting and implementing process – TACSO representative and the person involved in Technical assistance to the CSOs Cooperation Unit; three CSOs working on energy issues Eko-svest, Ceprosard and the third which wanted to remain anonymous; and two CSOs working on the security matters – Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia and Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia. The questions that the interviewees were asked derived from the Strategy itself (both old and new version) and contained questions such as the nature of their cooperation with the CSOs, i.e. the energy or security sector, the cooperation mechanisms they use, the CSOs’ successfulness in influencing the policy making process, the quality of the implementation of the Strategies etc.

¹⁵ Interview with Mr Ilija Djugumanov, Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia, conducted on 15.07.2013

¹⁶ Ministry of Economy, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013

promising positive practice of the Ministry of Economy clarified from a CSO point of view is that the Ministry has a list of relevant experts and institutions to which they send request for opinion. “We receive the information in that way.”¹⁷ This raises the concern about which organization will get the document from the Ministry. The Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior organize public debates and include CSOs in preparing legislation. Their tool of communication is their website; they also use mail, phone and post for communication with the CSOs. The Ministry of Defense says that it accepts comments which are constructive; the Ministry of Interior has also accepted some comments to their legal acts. From the given examples of which CSOs have had its comment accepted or were included in working groups for preparing a draft law or amendments to a law, they were all professional organizations, for example National Association for Arms or the Organization of Reserve Military Officers. From the received information, regarding both security institutions, the impression is that they are positively inclined towards the civil society: the Ministry of Interior has replied the CSOs working on issues connected to this Ministry have solid knowledge on the matter, while the Ministry of Defense expressed its openness for cooperation for any interested CSOs.¹⁸

It is interesting to note that the ministries trying to reach CSOs are concerned not to make preferences among CSOs, thus they confine themselves to communicate through their website. This is not dynamic and CSOs are not informed.¹⁹ Furthermore, CSOs tend to explore both formal and informal channels of communication and cooperation with institutions. Zoran Stojkovski, Executive Director of the Center for Institutional Development (CIRa), considers this dual approach to be a good practice; especially he encourages CSOs when contacting institutions to undertake all procedural, i.e. formal steps of the communication.²⁰ Also, as a good method of cooperation described by the CSO working in the energy area was the cooperation based on personal contacts and trust that has already been built between the representatives on both sides throughout the years.²¹

Superficial cooperation

Although cooperation between the civil society and the governmental sector generally exists, it does not go into the depth CSOs desire. In practice, it turns out that the inclusion of civil society is indeed mainly limited to “soft ways” of CSO inclusion (such as information sharing, provision

¹⁷ Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

¹⁸ Ministry of Interior, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013; Ministry of Defense, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June and July 2013

¹⁹ Interview with Ms Suncica Szadovska, Resident Advisor, TACSO Office Macedonia, conducted on 13.08.2013. The interview is given in personal capacity.

²⁰ Interview with Mr Zoran Stojkovski, Executive Director, CIRa, conducted on 09.07.2013

²¹ Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

of social services), but not effective when it comes to the law making process. Moreover, there are not many satisfactory results in the area of influencing the policy making as highest level of CSOs' cooperation with the Government.

The field research has shown that the interviewees who represent some of the more active and influential CSOs in the security and energy areas²² do not use the newly introduced tool ENER²³, the web tool which was specifically designed for interested parties to leave comments on legal acts. CSOs use different ways of communicating and cooperating with the energy and security sector: they attend public consultations, give comments to legal acts, mutually send invitations to events or meetings, ask questions by utilizing the Law on free access to public information or send formal requests, have joint projects, or even utilize the institutions' resources.

Regarding the platform ENER, which can be considered as one of the most important tools for CSOs' participation in the policy making process, CSOs usually complain that institutions do not accept civil society's comments to legal acts or do not reply to their input at all. The Ministry of Defense has not even published a law on ENER so there is no possibility to assess this tool in that regard; while the Ministry of Interior reported not to have received any comments on its legal acts via ENER. Also, part of the culpability for the failure of ENER is borne on the CSOs due to being inactive at this online platform. In addition, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior do not have database of CSOs; while the Unit has not created an electronic database for participation of the CSOs in the consultative processes with ministries²⁴, the latter which was envisaged in the new Strategy.

Despite the fact that the cooperation between the civil society and the energy and security sectors takes place in various forms, it is rare for CSOs to be included in earlier phases of the policy making or to get their comments accepted. "There is no feedback on our comments" explain the representatives of the CSO involved in energy matters and Cepsosard. But both CSOs agree that if essential comments are given they are generally accepted. A good example is the interviewed CSO's direct involvement in the preparation of a national strategy in the energy area showcasing inclusiveness of the preparation process.²⁵ At the same time, the Helsinki Committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the acceptance of their feedback saying that

²² There is no official rating or evaluation of successfulness of civil society organizations in advocacy or policy making in Macedonia, this evaluative statement is given based both on authors' perception and on the interviewees' statements on their successfulness in advocacy and policy making influence in the areas they work.

²³ Interview with Ms Ana Colovic Lesoska, Executive Director of Eko-svest, conducted on 14.08.2013; Interview with Mr Ilija Djugumanov, Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia, conducted on 15.07.2013; Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

²⁴ CSOs Cooperation Unit, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in August 2013; Ministry of Interior, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013; Ministry of Defense, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June and July 2013; Ministry of Economy, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013

²⁵ Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

usually only their technical comments are accepted.²⁶ The interviewee from the Energy Agency also pointed out that the Agency does not have a solid cooperation with CSOs, and the existing cooperation takes place in fact with profit-oriented organizations which do not really belong to the civil society.²⁷

Lack of capacities

The new Strategy analyzes the state of civil society in the country stating that human and financial resources are one of this sector's weaknesses due to which they have modest influence in the policy making. Both state institutions and CSOs are facing one common challenge – they lack the capacities for proper implementation of the Strategy.

CSOs are aware of the deficiencies of their own sector and possible reasons for non-cooperativeness. Although there are plenty of registered CSOs, only few of them have sustainability and specialization in concrete areas. While the energy and security sectors require expertise and a deeper understanding of the situation, it often happens that CSOs do not have enough to offer. In fact due to their inexperience they give trivial comments, giving an excuse for institutions to reject civil society's input. Furthermore when they comment, CSOs should make constructive comments – in this way they will gain the institutions' trust.²⁸ In this line is the assessment that CSOs also lack capacities in preparing analysis and lack an advocacy approach or have a confronting approach which does not lead to results. A winning combination is advocacy based on analysis with drafted solutions and a partner advocacy approach towards the institutions.²⁹ The interviewees also noted that there is low interest among the CSOs for the Strategy – only seven CSOs applied to participate in the drafting of the second Strategy.³⁰ Many interviewees emphasized that the civil society needs to be more proactive. "Our goal is to pressure the institutions to implement that Strategy that they have prepared" clarifies Ms Colovic Lesoska, Executive Director of Eko-svest.³¹

²⁶ Interview with Mr Voislav Stojanovski and Ms Jasmina Golubovska, Helsinki Committee of the Republic of Macedonia, conducted on 18.06.2013

²⁷ Interview with Mr Vladimir Sarach, Department for coordination of domestic and foreign projects, Energy Agency, conducted on 19.06.2013

²⁸ Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

²⁹ Interview with Mr Zoran Stojkovski, Executive Director, CIRa, conducted on 09.07.2013

³⁰ Interview with Ms Julijana Daskalov, Technical assistance to the CSOs Cooperation Unit in the General Secretariat, conducted on 07.08.2013

³¹ Interview with Ms Ana Colovic Lesoska, Executive Director of Eko-svest, conducted on 14.08.2013

Good practice example: establishment of a working group of CSOs on energy and environmental issues

Ms Colovic Lesoska explained the positive experience from being part of a working group of CSOs working on environmental issues. The initiative was founded by a CSO as part of a project and entailed six CSOs. After the project ended, four out of six continued to be part of the working group. The goal of the working group was to collect comments on legal acts and send them jointly to the stakeholders. “Imagine the debates on environmental issues as the problematic Boshkov Most and Lukovo Pole projects – in the room there are many representatives of institutions but also four of us, joint civil society representatives. We are always invited and have joint position. And this practice has effect on the stakeholders”.³²

According to the old Strategy ministries should appoint persons responsible for developing the cooperation with civil society. However, the Ministry of Interior for example has not respected this obligation.³³ Also, a frequent change of the contact persons has been noted.³⁴ The institutions' representatives for cooperation with CSOs have this assignment as addition to their everyday work. How much they work with CSOs depends on their personal motivation. In case these persons responsible for cooperation with CSOs are changed, the practice of cooperation also changes.³⁵ When discussing capacities, the Energy Department of the Ministry of Economy is under-staffed³⁶. The Energy Agency also lacks capacities, which is considered to be the main barrier for the Agency to cooperate with the civil society. The Energy Agency contact point is in charge of media contacts, the law on free access to public information, the contact for cooperation with the civil society and head of the human resources, legal and economic department. “If we do not have capacities, we can not cooperate” explained the Energy Agency representative.³⁷

What is more, the CSOs Cooperation Unit is not able to perform its task of facilitating the cooperation between the CSOs and the institutions. Ms Suncica Sazdovska, TACSO Office Macedonia clarified that the Unit also does not have an allocated budget for the organization of workshops or meetings with the CSOs.³⁸ In addition, Ms Daskalov, Technical assistance to the

³² Ibid

³³ Ministry of Interior, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in June 2013;

³⁴ Nikica Kusinikova, Report on effective mechanisms for coordination with other state organs responsible for implementing the Strategy

³⁵ Interview with Ms Suncica Sazdovska, Resident Advisor, TACSO Office Macedonia, conducted on 13.08.2013. The interview is given in personal capacity.

³⁶ Interview with Ms Ljupka Gligorova, Coordinator for networking and institutional strengthening, Ceprosard, conducted on 10.07.2013; Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

³⁷ Interview with Mr Vladimir Sarach, Department for coordination of domestic and foreign projects, Energy Agency, conducted on 19.06.2013

³⁸ Interview with Ms Suncica Sazdovska, Resident Advisor, TACSO Office Macedonia, conducted on 13.08.2013. The interview is given in personal capacity.

Unit explains CSOs usually go directly to ministries.³⁹ The CSOs Cooperation Unit however has replied that it was involved in cooperation between CSOs and ministries, among which were not the analyzed energy and security sector institutions. The Unit also publishes each year on its website a call for CSOs to give their input in the preparation of the Program for Work of the Government⁴⁰, which seems to offer CSOs opportunity for influencing the agenda setting. However, the experience has shown that the bureaucratic top-down steering is responsible for the Unit's inefficiency and a lack of its independence from the Government.⁴¹ Possible solutions were in directions of the Unit becoming an agency or a sector.⁴² The low positioning of the Unit in the organizational structure of the General Secretariat also shows the treatment that CSOs receive from the Government – “while the business sector has a whole Ministry, the CSOs get only one Unit.”⁴³

³⁹ Interview with Ms Julijana Daskalov, Technical assistance to the CSOs Cooperation Unit in the General Secretariat, conducted on 07.08.2013

⁴⁰ CSOs Cooperation Unit, Information obtained by utilizing the Law on free access to public information in August 2013;

⁴¹ Irina Lepadatu, (2012), Inter-sector cooperation in Macedonia – Improving the dialogue with the civil society at local and national level, in: Ana Stojilovska et al (ed.), Interns' yearbook 2011, Analytica.

⁴² Interview with Ms Julijana Daskalov, Technical assistance to the CSOs Cooperation Unit in the General Secretariat, conducted on 07.08.2013

⁴³ Interview with Mr Zoran Stojkovski, Executive Director, CIRa, conducted on 09.07.2013

Conclusion

The aim of this policy paper was to assess the cooperativeness of the relevant institutions in the energy and security sector in Macedonia with the civil society against the background of the implementation of the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society.

The paper showed that the Strategy has been set too ambitiously and is not implemented in practice as envisaged. The findings support the claim that the energy and security sector are less cooperative than other sectors, showcasing uneven sector-related implementation of the Strategy. Few of the CSOs are satisfied with the cooperation with certain institutions of these sectors; however major dissatisfaction is also noted. The satisfied CSOs have the specific sector's employees in their midst or are experienced organizations which have the trust of the relevant sector, which is crucial for the CSO to be found in the sector's contact list, whereas the main approach consisted of informal direct contacts. CSOs are generally not seen as sources of expertise by the energy and security institutions, while these institutions mostly cooperate with professional organizations or organizations with which they have already established long term cooperation in the process of policy making. Cooperation between the civil society and the security and energy sector institutions exists in various forms. It turned out, however, that it is a real challenge for the CSOs to influence the policy making process in the energy and security sector domain and especially to be provided with feedback on the submitted opinions on emerging legislation. The CSOs, the CSOs Cooperation Unit and the energy and security sector institutions lack sufficient capacities, which is one of main reasons that cooperation does not take place at a very satisfactory level.

Recommendations:For the institutions:

- The Ministry of Interior to appoint a person responsible for cooperation with the CSOs, in line with the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society;
- The energy and security sector institutions to minimize the rotation of contact persons for cooperation with CSOs, thus enabling them to get to know the CSOs working in the area;
- The energy and security institutions' contact persons for cooperation with CSOs to be allocated sufficient time and resources for fulfilling their obligations;
- The Ministry of Economy, the Energy Agency, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense to set up a form on their website for gathering basic information on CSOs, their expertise and contact details, to be filled in by interested CSOs that work in their area;
- The Ministry of Economy, the Energy Agency, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense to set up database of CSOs working in their area so they may inform them more directly via mail about their activities;
- The Ministry of Economy, the Energy Agency, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense to respect their part of obligations from the Strategy and the Codex of good practices on the participation of the civil society in the policy making process by uploading the legal acts they are preparing on ENER, to reply to the received feedback from CSOs, to seriously consider their input and to justify the reasons for rejecting CSOs' proposals;
- The CSOs Cooperation Unit to become an independent Agency;
- The CSOs Cooperation Unit to establish an electronic database of CSOs for participation of the CSOs in the consultative processes with ministries and to regularly update it.

For CSOs:

- The CSOs to learn and explore all legally stipulated cooperation mechanisms and instruments from the Strategy and the Codex as utilizing ENER, preparing policy papers, organizing events etc. in order to implement them when approaching the energy and security institutions;
- The CSOs beside the legal procedures of cooperation and communication, to approach the energy and security institutions also directly by utilizing phone, mail, face-to-face meetings and similar;

- The CSOs to consider the possibility of uniting with other CSOs working in their area and for the purpose of having a joint approach in the communication with state institutions especially concerning commenting legal acts;
- The CSOs that work in the energy and security area to specialize in these areas, building up gradually their expertise, and visibility, thus commenting the legal acts exclusively based on their research and past work, for the purpose of increasing their own credibility and being considered by the security and energy institutions respectively as serious partners.

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Interview with Mr Zoran Stojkovski, Executive Director, CIRa, conducted on 09.07.2013

Interview with Ms Ana Colovic Lesoska, Executive Director of Eko-svest, conducted on 14.08.2013

Interview with Ms Julijana Daskalov, Technical assistance to the CSOs Cooperation Unit in the General Secretariat, conducted on 07.08.2013

Interview with Ms Ljupka Gligorova, Coordinator for networking and institutional strengthening, Cepsard, conducted on 10.07.2013

Interview with Ms Suncica Sazdovska, Resident Advisor , TACSO Office Macedonia, conducted on 13.08.2013. The interview is given in personal capacity.

Interview with two representatives working in a CSO on energy issues, conducted on 18.06.2013

Interview with Mr Voislav Stojanovski and Ms Jasmina Golubovska, Helsinki Committee of the Republic of Macedonia, conducted on 18.06.2013

Interview with Ms Marija Sazdevski and Ms Simona Ognenovska, MCIC, conducted on 11.06.2013

E-Mail interview with Ministry of Economy, conducted in July 2013

POLICY BRIEF

Security and energy sectors' cooperation with the civil society in Macedonia – friends or foes?

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