

DIALOGUE OF CHANGE CONFERENCE:
NURTURING PARTICIPATIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY DIALOGUE
IN REFORM PROCESSES IN SERBIA

1. Ratio for the Conference

With a new Government being constituted and Country Report being published in coming month there is a good momentum to reinvigorate the discussion on further improvement of overall environment for cooperation between government and public authorities at all level of governance (from central to local) and civil society (CSOs) for advancing overall reforms in Serbia, particularly those facilitated under the EU accession process.

Participation and contribution of CSOs in decision making and policy development processes represent one of the key predisposition for developing good governance practices, pushing for necessary reforms and nurturing democracy across Serbia's communities. Partnership between CSOs and public authorities needs to be based on principles of mutual understanding, equality and recognition of contribution from each partner in the reform processes.

The existing strategic and regulatory framework in Serbia provides a space for CSOs participation in decision making and policy development at different levels of governance (from local to central level). However, further efforts are needed to ensure systematic cooperation between the both sectors. CSOs are often not recognised as reliable partners in policy development and the potentials of the sector is neither recognised nor exploited to the fullest by the public authorities in reform processes. CSOs' participation in policy-making and legislative process still takes place largely on ad hoc basis, and the full potential of the sector is not being utilized. Mechanisms for participation and cooperation are in practice on ad hoc basis and unclear. The inclusiveness and transparency of the reform process need to be improved as a matter of priority and public consultations on policies and legislation to be more than just a formality.

The inclusive and participatory nature of multi sector cooperation creates predisposition for success of reform processes in practice. Consequently, successful cooperation achieves a greater sense of mutual ownership over reforms' outcomes and strengthen the sustainability of reform processes. The cooperation subsequently upscale mutual trust and further fortify the determination amongst involved actors to continue with the pace of reforms.

This is of particular importance for the EU integration process since the transposition and implementation of EU Acquis, standards and values in Serbia is a challenging process which demands substantial efforts and transformation of Serbian society. Hence, the cooperation has proved in practice to be a powerful mechanism for joining limited resources, providing mutually acceptable solutions and win-win situations in reform processes under *the shapeau* of the EU integration.

2. Working Objectives of the Conference

The conference will have two key working objectives:

a) Discussions on the challenges and perspectives of improvement the overall environment for partnerships between CSOs and public authorities - Participants in the conference will be able to discuss throughout several panels the state of the art frameworks, processes and practices of cooperation between CSOs and public authorities in addressing issues and exploiting developmental potentials of communities and initialising and facilitating necessary reforms in the framework of EU integration process of Serbia.

b) Presentation of successful stories and lessons learned – The conference will be organised as interlocutor's meeting. Best practices and lessons learned from the implementation of projects supported by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia aiming at initialising, facilitating result oriented cross sector dialogue will be mainstreamed into the discussions on all three panels.

Dialogue of Change Conference
Hotel Zira
- November 3rd 2022 –

09:30 – 10:00	Arrival and registration of the participants, panellists and moderators
10:00 – 10:30	<p><i>Food for thought:</i></p> <p>H.E. Emanuel Giofre, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia (to be confirmed)</p> <p><i>Representative of the Ministry, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Societal Dialogue (to be confirmed)</i></p> <p>Milorad Bjeletic, Executive Director, Belgrade Open School</p>
10:30 – 12:00	<p>PANEL 1 – Dialogues on Good Governance: Cooperation between CSOs and decision makers in reform process in Serbia</p> <p>Danka Bogetic, Program Manager for Public Administration Reform, Delegation of the European Union to Serbia</p> <p>Ljiljana Uzelac, Head of the Department for Strategic Planning and E-governance, Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government (to be confirmed)</p> <p>Prof. Dejan Vucetic, Faculty of Law, University of Nis</p> <p>Snezana Zivadinovic, President, Society for Creativity Development, Aleksinac</p> <p>Moderator: Vladimir M. Pavlovic, Belgrade Open School</p> <p><u>Session description:</u> The discussion within the panel should tackle the key principles to be respected and applied in the future when it comes to partnership between CSOs and public authorities and CSOs participation in upcoming ongoing reforms in the good governance sector being implemented under the framework of the EU Accession of Serbia. Preparation, enactment and implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy (PAR) will be used as a showcase. How did the process of CSOs participation in preparation and development of PAR really looked like (selection process, participation in different sub-groups, inner group dynamics)? How the equal treatment of CSOs during the development of PAR Strategy was secured, particularly in following: maintaining the undisturbed flow of information relevant for the process, processing the CSOs' contributions and providing adequate feedback from the side of public authorities representatives and securing proper informing of the wide audience about the process.</p> <p>Since this is the 2nd year of the implementation of the PAR strategy, what was the envisaged role of civil society in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation and is this role being performed by civil society in practice? Looking back at the entire process from initial activities for development of strategy to the point of implementation and monitoring, what worked well and what could be improved? What is the ideal scenario for future partnering between CSOs and public authorities in decision making within good governance, particularly having in mind the recommendations from this year's EU Country report?</p>



12:00 – 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 – 14:00	<p>PANEL 2 – Dialogues on Human Rights: The LGBTQ Case in Serbia</p> <p>Mr Dirk Lorenz, Head of Political Section, Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Serbia</p> <p>Ivana Joksimovic, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Societal Dialogue</p> <p>Ana Petrovic, Association Da se zna</p> <p>Prof Sanja Djordjevic Aleksovski, Law Faculty, University of Nis</p> <p>Moderator: Prof Dejan Pavlovic, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade</p> <p><u>Session Description:</u> The discussion will also address the key preconditions for the sustainable partnership between CSOs and public authorities when it comes to defending, improving and promoting human rights in Serbia. Here, preparation and enactment of Discrimination Law and Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination will be addressed as showcase. On the other hand latest evolvments like bringing back the Same Sex Union Law enactment to the very beginning of the process, aftermath of the organisation of the Euro Pride showed that there is much to be done. How did the process of CSOs participation in preparation and development of Strategy/Law really looked like (CSOs selection process in working groups, inner group dynamics, public consultations, public debates on both Strategy and the Law)? How the equal treatment of CSOs during the development of Strategy/Law was secured, particularly in following: maintaining the undisturbed flow of information relevant for the process, facilitating the CSOs' contributions and providing adequate feedback from the side of public authorities representatives</p> <p>Since the Law is passed in 2021 and Strategy in 2022 what are the planned activities to secure the CSOs participation in implementation and monitoring of the effects of these strategic/legislative documents?</p> <p>Looking back at the all discussed processes (being good or bad samples), what worked well and what could be improved? What is the ideal scenario for future partnering between CSOs and public authorities in decision making related to human rights, especially having in mind the recommendations from 2022 EU Country report for Serbia .</p>
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch break

15:00 – 16:30	<p>PANEL 3 – Green Dialogues</p> <p>Antoine Avignon, Programme Manager for Environment and Climate Change, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia</p> <p>Sandra Dokic, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Environmental Protection</p> <p>Tanja Petrovic, Executive Director, Young Researchers of Serbia</p> <p>Prof Violeta Orlovic Lovren, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade</p> <p>Moderator: Mirjana Jovanovic, Belgrade Open School</p> <p><u>Session description:</u> Preparation and enactment of the Environment Protection Strategy will be used as a showcase for discussion on challenges and perspectives of improvement of partnerships between CSOs and public authorities in environmental decision making. What strategic and legislative documents must be taken into account during the process of preparation of the Strategy? What concrete steps we all should take to secure the equal participation and substantial contribution of CSOs to development of Environment Protection Strategy? How to secure equal treatment of CSOs particularly in following: setup and practice of the working group responsible for drafting the Strategy, how to facilitate public consultations and public debate? How to maintain the undisturbed flow of information relevant for the process and secure proper informing of the wide audience about the process. We are also aware of the fact that certain decision making processes that implied partnerships between CSOs and public authorities, such as preparation and enactment of the Law on Climate Changes and National Spatial Plan faced serious challenges. The possibility for CSOs-public authorities to engage in policy dialogue and joint decision making is possible and plausible, but at the same time in practice often scarce and even non-existing. Why is it so? What is the ideal scenario for future partnering between CSOs and public authorities in environmental decision making, especially having in mind the recommendations from this year's EU Country report for Serbia in this particular sector?</p>
16:30 – 17:00	Closing remarks