



Balkan Civic Practices

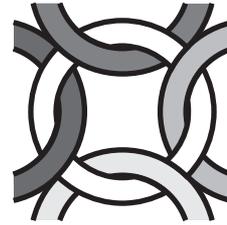
BALKAN
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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PARTNERSHIP

Floriana Nappini



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Balkan Civic Practices | #2

| A Practical Guide to Partnership
How to make it work



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Introduction

The term “**Partnership**” refers to the idea of the involvement of significantly different bodies or entities as partners, working together (in spite of underlining differences) to attain a particular project, objective or aim. Applied to socio-economic development, “Partnership” conveys the idea that cooperation between different bodies or institutions or territorial actors can achieve very good results and can increase the quality of the policies implemented, ultimately accelerating and improving socio-economic and territorial development.

Intuitively, partnership seems to be a very positive arrangement. Potentially, partnership can be very beneficial and productive. It can help overcome divisions between for example different government departments or different sectors of society. It can improve the delivery of services and the quality of development strategies. It can bring significant added value to the partners if each partner can gain from the expertise, knowledge and resources (also financial) the other partners bring to the partnership. Also, partnership is connected to ideas of **participatory democracy** and implies equality between partners.

However, in spite of the encouraging ideas it reflects, the practice of partnership is considerably complex and the results of its implementation are rather mixed.

Partnership increases democratisation, legitimacy and accountability of the partners and the processes.

Partnership is an embracing concept which can mean different things to different people and can be defined and implemented creatively. From a more theoretical point of view, a model designed by Pratt, broadly defines partnership as a spectrum of relations and working arrangements which stretches from competition to cooperation and includes coordination and co-evolution¹. Within this spectrum, virtually infinite partnership possibilities exist. The type of partnership created will depend on a number of elements such as the type and intentions of partners involved, the context of the partnership, its content, the tradition and culture concerning partnership etc. Hence, in spite of its intuitive value, **partnership involves major tensions which can be structured very differently and can yield very different results**. As highlighted by Balloch and Taylor, there cannot be a blueprint for successful partnerships. On the contrary, each partnership will find its own balance between the elements, relations and tensions it includes (e.g. the flexibility it requires to be innovative and the necessary accountability of the public institutions involved, the leadership, expertise and wide participation, large consensus, diverging interest and diversity).

Against this background, this guide cannot aim at providing a unified model for partnership nor a single definition. Instead, this guide wants to examine and at the same time structure into a useful practical tool the various levels, forms and types of partnership to provide a detailed overview of what partnership can be, on how it could and should be used or improved. To do this, this guide is based on a number of different sources ranging from more academic research to day-to-day practice of partnership.

While the main perspective taken by this guide will be partnership within the EU and a focus on the EU Structural Funds (SF), most of the arguments and practices presented are applicable across a number of other policy areas within both the EU context but also the national, regional and local contexts. In fact, there are increasing similarities between the Structural Funds, the Pre-Accession aid (IPA) and the instrument of the new Neighbourhood policy (ENPI). The structure of these new instruments (and particularly their cross-boarder dimension) is increasingly being modelled on the current structure of the Structural Funds. For example, the Commission is no longer

¹ Pratt et al (1998) in Balloch, S. Taylor, M. "Partnership Working: Policy and Practice" The Policy Press, 2001

simply earmarking money. It is now increasingly trying to make sure that the funds it earmarks are used sensibly by the relevant authorities. This means that funds provided by the EU will have to be used to implement **active development policies**. The Commission now asks for **co-financing** from the relevant authorities. This is done with the aim of increasing the sense of responsibility and the efforts of the authorities towards an efficient and effective utilization of these funds (as the experience with the Structural Funds shows).

A second element of similarity concerns the **multi-annual programming** which, as in the case of Structural Funds so far, will also characterize the external actions of the EU. This multi-annual programming will force the relevant authorities to think through their development strategy looking beyond the opportunistic fund-hunting, to the actual utilization of these funds: how these funds will be used over time, how they will impact the economy and the local community etc.

Starting from the next programming period (2007-2013), the **EU partnership principle** (examined in greater detail in the paragraphs below), will also be applied to the New Neighbourhood Instrument. The Commission will ask for the creation of partnerships to include representatives of different bodies and organizations of each country in the planning and strategy development. Thus, the Commission is contributing to the creation of democratic processes at the same time ensuring that the projects implemented will be useful for both the EU as a whole and the single country.

All these elements are evident in the Commission proposal for the Regulation "laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument" [COM(2004) 628 Final] where Article 4 says:

"....

- assistance shall be established in partnership between the Commission and the beneficiaries, and programming of assistance should be carried out involving, as appropriate, central, regional and local authorities, civil society, economic and social partners;
- assistance shall be cofinanced in order to promote ownership and maximise its leverage effect.

These principles are also applied in the context of the EU cohesion policy and reflect the dual nature of the instrument (external policy and economic and

social cohesion) when it comes to financing crossborder and transregional cooperation between partner countries and Member States.”

To summarize, it is reasonable to argue that experiences and **best practices** concerning partnership, taken from years of SF implementation in the Member States (both old and new) could indeed be relevant for all neighbouring countries covered by the EU relevant policies.

Thus, starting from the definition of the partnership principle at the EU level, this guide will try to explore the concepts and ideas it underlies as well as some of the forms and structures it can take. The practice of partnership is included in this guide also in the form of practical examples and best practices taken from a number of different countries (ranging from old to new Members States and EU neighbouring countries).

1. PARTNERSHIP IN THE EU

In the EU context, the **partnership principle** was firstly introduced in 1988 as one of the four fundamental principles governing the Structural Funds (SF) - the others being Additionality, Programming and Concentration. Since then, the principle has evolved significantly starting from a narrow definition, which only included the Commission and the Member States to a wider partnership including the intermediate levels of government (i.e. the Regions) and later the social partners and finally, as defined by the Commission, "other competent authorities".

The partnership principle definition contained in the 1999 Council Regulation (1260/1999) is the one regulating the current programming period.

Article 8 of the 1999 Regulation says about partnership:

"1. Community actions shall complement or contribute to corresponding national operations. They shall be drawn up in close consultation, hereinafter referred to as the "partnership", between the Commission and the Member State, together with the authorities and bodies designated by the Member State within the framework of its national rules and current practices, namely:

- *the regional and local authorities and other competent public authorities,*
- *the economic and social partners,*
- *any other relevant competent bodies within this framework.*

The partnership shall be conducted in full compliance with the respective institutional, legal and financial powers of each of the partners as defined in the first subparagraph.

In designating the most representative partnership at national, regional, local or other level, the Member State shall create a wide and effective association of all the relevant bodies, according to national rules and practice, taking account of the need to promote equality between men and women and sustainable development through the integration of environmental protection and improvement requirements.

The Partnership principle aims at achieving the closest possible cooperation in each Member State between the Commission and the relevant authorities at national, regional and local level throughout all the various phases of the Structural Funds from the preparatory to implementation (including monitoring and evaluation).

All designated parties, hereinafter referred to as the “partners”, shall be partners pursuing a common goal.

2. Partnership shall cover the preparation, financing, monitoring and evaluation of assistance. Member States shall ensure the association of the relevant partners at the different stages of programming, taking account of the time limit for each stage.

3. In application of the principle of subsidiarity, the implementation of assistance shall be the responsibility of the Member States, at the appropriate territorial level according to the arrangements specific to each Member State, and without prejudice to the powers vested in the Commission, notably for implementing the general budget of the European Communities.”

It is only very recently that there have been talks of expressively **introducing NGOs in the definition of the partnership principle**. In fact, for the first time, the Commission, in the proposal for Structural Funds Regulations for the next programming period [COM (2004) 492 final] mentions NGOs and other civil societies organisations as active partners in the Structural Funds.

As it was largely expected when the proposal came out (i.e. July 2004), the article defining the new partnership principle in the proposed regulations was struck down in the Council. Fortunately, the European Parliament took a strong stand in favour of civil society and the indication of NGOs was kept in the final text of the Regulation even though, if compared with the original Commission proposal, the final wording was indeed watered down by the Council.

The new Article 11 of the Council Regulation 1083/2006 (published on 11 July 2006) defines partnership as follows:

“1. The objectives of the Funds shall be pursued in the framework of close cooperation, (hereinafter referred to as partnership), between the Commission and each Member State. Each Member State shall organise, where appropriate and in accordance with current national rules and practices, a partnership with authorities and bodies such as:

- a) the competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities;*
- b) the economic and social partners;*
- c) any other appropriate body representing civil society, environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality between men and women.*

Each Member State shall designate the most representative partners at national, regional and local level and in the economic, social, environmental or other spheres (hereinafter referred to as partners), in accordance with

national rules and practices, taking account of the need to promote equality between men and women and sustainable development through the integration of environmental protection and improvement requirements.

2. The partnership shall be conducted in full compliance with the respective institutional, legal and financial powers of each partner category as defined in paragraph 1.

The partnership shall cover the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall involve, where appropriate, each of the relevant partners, and particularly the regions, in the different stages of programming within the time limit set for each stage.

3. Each year the Commission shall consult the organizations representing the economic and social partners at European level on assistance from the Funds.”

In practice, the partnership principle at national level is applied very differently throughout Europe.

From the point of view of civil society organisations, this new article 11 is only a small step in the right direction. On the one hand, it represents an official recognition from the EU institutions of the important role played by civil society, which might no longer be completely ignored by the Member States. On the other hand, the new definition of the partnership principle will indeed leave the Member States with only a vague guideline of what they should do with it.

As evident in the Regulations quoted above, the partnership principle is closely related to the **subsidiarity principle** which entails that decisions should be taken by the most competent level of government. From the point of view of civil society organisations, the subsidiarity principle can have an ambiguous role. On the one hand, it can be used to argue for a broader partnership including NGOs and all other relevant territorial actors. On the other hand, it leaves considerable room for manoeuvring to the Member States with little guidance from the EU.

Each Member State implements the principle according to its own tradition concerning cooperation between public authorities and other bodies, its degree of decentralisation and the attitude of the various government tiers towards involving other actors in policy and decision-making processes. Hence, in reality, Member States have considerable scope for favouring or hindering partnership by providing a wider/narrower definition, by setting certain rules for running/monitoring committees and by providing mechanisms in support of partners' involvement.

1.1. The new Structural Funds Architecture and Partnership

The reform of the Structural Funds which is currently being developed and which will apply to the next programming period (2007-2013) will affect the working of the partnership principle at various levels. To understand how this could take place it is important to look at the new architecture of the SF and the elements influencing and characterising the reform.

The reorganisation of the Cohesion policy around the Lisbon strategy has been translated into a number of changes which may indeed affect the working of the partnership principle and may increase difficulties for civil society involvement in the funds.

A first important concept which has shaped the new SF is the so-called **Lisbon strategy**. This strategy (agreed in March 2000 by the Heads of State and Government of the EU) consisted in a blueprint for the achievement of a successful and competitive knowledge-based European economy by 2010. On the one hand, the Lisbon strategy has largely remained a vague concept which, at the time of writing, is still far from being accomplished. On the other hand, the European Commission has been pushing for a real implementation of the strategy by rethinking and reorganising the strategy from both a theoretical and practical perspective. From the theoretical point of view, the Commission has reshaped and redefined the strategy (through for example its mid-term review –Kok report–). From the practical point of view, the Commission has reorganised its Cohesion policy around the Lisbon strategy itself. Hence, investments of the EU through its Cohesion policy will focus on a limited number of priorities directly reflecting Lisbon. Here, R&D activities (i.e. research and development) as a basis for economic change and advancement seem to be gaining considerable ground.

Concentration on Lisbon has encouraged the **mainstreaming of Community Initiatives and innovative actions**. These initiatives and actions have represented so far the main access point for civil society organisations to Structural Funds. On the one hand, this mainstreaming represents a sort of "upgrading" for the programmes themselves. On the other hand, it also means that they practically disappear and that it would be up to the member states to include them in the national and regional programmes. For civil society organisations this would mean fewer possibilities to get involved in partnership at the operational level (depending on how far the Community initiatives and innovative actions will be implemented through the SF). At the same time this may also affect participation

in the programming and management of the funds (e.g. monitoring committees) since there is a danger that the activities where civil society is usually a partner might decrease vis-à-vis the new priorities and objectives conceived around the Lisbon strategy².

Another very important aspect is the increasing **decentralisation of the SF**. As it will be mentioned in the paragraphs describing strategic partnership, the European Commission has simplified the procedure for SF programming and has reduced its own involvement in the determination of the programmes and actions to be implemented through the SF. This disengagement of the Commission may, by gradually transforming the Commission's role into a mere "auditor" of large projects, create a deficit of multi-level governance and involvement of civil society in the management of the SF.

² A comparative analysis of the objectives and priorities of the old (2000-2006) and new (2007-2013) programming period can be found in Chapter 3 "Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund and Pre-accession Aid" of the Guide to European Union Funding edited by ECAS.

2. TYPES AND FORMS OF PARTNERSHIP

From the definition given so far it would seem that the partnership principle only applies to the political decision-making at EU and/or national level (which can be called “**strategic partnership**”). However, the daily implementation of EU Funds also constantly uses the partnership principle. Nowadays, virtually all European projects require a large cross-sectoral and often transnational partnership. When applying for EU funding one of the most important requirements and often also one of the elements of success or failure of a project is the composition of the partnership managing the project.

The partnership principle at the political level has been reflected and translated into a day-to-day practice of projects implementation.

Civil society organisations are more actively involved in this second type of partnership (**operational/project partnership**) while in the first type they are still struggling to gain the recognition they deserve. The two types or levels of partnership have common elements as well as significant differences.

Each of the two types of partnership can take very different forms. From various kinds of consultations to round tables and forums, partnership at different levels can be practically implemented very differently. Very often, the form that partnership takes depends on the geographical level of its implementation. For example, at the EU level, partnership can take the form of consultation (with wider interest groups) or negotiating tables between the Member States and the Commission. At the national level, partnership can take the consultation and negotiation form. At the local level, partnership more often takes the form of forums and round tables but also the more project partnership operational structure.

The following paragraphs briefly analyse the types of partnership and discuss some of the forms and structures it can take.

2.1. Strategic Partnership

This type of partnership closely reflects the partnership principle as it is defined in the Council Regulation already seen. Hence, this partnership involves several bodies and institutions from the European Commission to national, regional and local authorities who work together, however at different levels and with significant differences from one Member State to another, to determine the broader context for the actual implementation of the Structural Funds. In practice, this partnership involves **negotiations and talks between the various levels of government**: the Commission and the Member States around a negotiating table and then the Member States and the regional, local and other authorities they have included in their national consultations. The results of this national partnership and consultation are then brought by each Member State to the negotiating table with the Commission.

In relation to the institutions and actors which make up partnerships at this level we can distinguish between the actors involved in the negotiations (which have been just mentioned) and the bodies involved in the management and operational development of the partnership. These bodies i.e. the **Managing Authority** and the **Monitoring Committees** play an important role once the strategic guidelines, priorities and objectives have been agreed and they create a link between the two partnership levels.

Partnership at this political level is fundamental to determine political and economic guidelines, priorities, strategic objectives and it also determines the financial and operational instruments.

2.1.1. Managing Authority

The MA is a public or private body at national, regional or local level which is designated by the Member States to manage the Structural Funds. Its responsibilities include monitoring, evaluations and ensuring good financial implementation.

2.1.2. Monitoring Committees

They are set up by each Member State in agreement with the Managing Authority. They consist of representatives of Regions, Member States and other responsible bodies and also the Commission as an observer. They oversee implementation, adjust strategy if necessary, consider and approve criteria for selecting the operations co-financed and examine the results and achievements of implementation.

The composition of those two bodies is determined by the Member States. On the one side, public local authorities and other major territorial actors are fighting to get a bigger role in the negotiations between the Commission and the Member States. On the other side there are organisations of the civil society struggling to get seats in the Monitoring Committees. Civil society presence in those committees is generally poor even though it changes significantly from one Member State to another and from one programme to another.

2.2.3. How does it work?

The following section will briefly summarise the main steps of Structural Funds elaboration at this level of partnership. This way, it will be possible to see how partnership works during each phase. It will then be possible to examine which and how far bodies/institutions/organisations are involved in the process.

It should be acknowledged that, at the time of writing, the context of Structural Funds negotiations is particularly difficult. This difficulty arises from the fact that the current programming period (2000-2006) is drawing to an end therefore, while the current SF rules for implementation are still running, attention is being significantly shifted to the new programming period (2007-2013) with all the changes it will bring to all phases of SF negotiation and implementation. The following paragraphs will attempt a comparative description of such steps.

Step 1 – The wider policy framework

In general terms, negotiations on the SF are initiated by the Commission with a policy document. For the 2007-2013 period the Commission issued the **Third Cohesion Report** in March 2004. This report contained an assessment of economic and social cohesion across the EU and presented the proposed policy framework and instruments for the new SF programming period. This report has been discussed at the EU level among its institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament and also the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions). Other bodies and institutions should and often do (even though at a different extent) take part to this round of consultations/negotiations such as regional governments, the economic and social partners, civil society.

Step 2 – Grounding the future rules

On the basis of the results of the previous steps, the Commission draws up a proposal on the SF regulations. For the 2007-2013 programming period, the Commission issued, on 14 July 2004, a proposal for General Regulation on the SF (COM-2004/492) and four specific regulations (i.e. 2004/493 (European Social Fund), 2004/494 (Cohesion Fund), 2004/495 (European Regional Development Fund), 2004/496 (cross-border cooperation), 2004/490 (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development). Before they become law, the regulations are discussed and agreed by the three EU institutions through the assent procedure for the General Regulation and co-decision procedure for the fund-specific regulations³. Those regulations will determine the way in which the SF will be managed and implemented. For example, the original proposal by the European Commission for the General Regulation on the SF included (article 11 already seen) a clear mention of NGOs as partners in the development, monitoring and evaluation of structural interventions. As previously highlighted, the mention of NGOs was kept on the text in spite of the attempts from the Council to delete it. In practice, even though the final version of the article defining partnership has been indeed watered down at the Council level, it might still mean an important change in the way the funds are programmed and implemented nationally.

To help shaping the SF interventions for the 2007-2013 programming period, in July 2005 the Commission also issued the **Community Strategic Guidelines** (COM-2005/299). The Guidelines contain priorities and objectives which should be broadly followed by all Member States in the utilisation of the funds.

3 The **co-decision procedure** is based on the principle of parity between the European Parliament and the Council. It means that that neither institution may adopt legislation without the other's assent. If the two Institutions cannot agree on a piece of proposed legislation, it is put before a conciliation committee, composed of equal numbers of Council and Parliament representatives. Once this committee has reached an agreement, the text is sent once again to Parliament and the Council so that they can finally adopt it as law. The **assent procedure** means that the Council has to obtain the European Parliament's assent before certain very important decisions are taken. The Parliament gives its opinion on the proposed legislation but it cannot propose amendments: it must either accept or reject it. Acceptance ('assent') requires an absolute majority of the vote cast.

Step 3 – The national level

For the 2000-2006 period, the Member States drafted, on the basis of the policy framework agreed at the EU level, a **National Development Plan** which outlined how the SF would be spent (in terms of programmes, objectives and specific goals). Once this plan was discussed and agreed with the Commission, it took the name of **Community Support Framework (CSF)** or **Single Programming Document (SPD)**⁴. Following the CSF or SPD, further documents i.e. the **Operational Programmes** would be drafted by the Member States and agreed with the Commission. The Operational Programmes covered either a particular region or theme and in that framework they outlined the specific aims, priorities, measures and instruments of the programmes they intended to implement. The details of the Operational Programmes were set out into a further document i.e. the Programming Complement (which for example, identified the Managing Authorities).

For the next programming period, the Member States have drafted a **National Strategic Reference Framework** on the basis of the Community Strategic Guidelines. The National Development Plans are no longer obligatory; however, the Operational Programmes still have to be agreed with the European Commission. The Programming Complements are no longer required.

To summarize, the programming phases for the 2007-2013 period have been clearly simplified. **The European Commission is reducing its role in the actual management of the SF** thus leaving increasing freedom to the Member States in determining the utilisation of the SF.

2.1.4. How is partnership formed at this level and which bodies take part to it?

A recent discussion paper published by the European Commission (DG Regio) analysed the implementation of the partnership principle in 14 Member States during the 2000-2006 programming period⁵. The paper was based on internal documents and assessments

⁴ The SPD is usually used for smaller countries.

⁵ "Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period – Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle" Discussion paper of DG Regio – European Commission, November 2005

of the Commission (in most cases prepared by desk officers for each geographical area) and on questionnaires filled in by the Commission's officially recognised partners^{6 7}.

The paper summarised the involvement of actors in the SF 2000-2006 programming period with the following table:

Phase		Actors	Role of partners
Programming	Developments Plan/ Community Support Framework (CSF)	Commission (COM), MS	Consultative
	Single Programming Document (SPD)	National, regional, other level authorities - appointed by the Member State (MS)	Consultative
	Operational Programme (OP)	COM, MS	Consultative
	Programme Completion (PC)	MS or Management authority (MA), Monitoring Committee (MC), partners	Consultative role, or acting through the MA or the MC
Management /Implementation		MS, national, regional, local level authorities, public or private organisations - appointed by the MS	Consultative role, or acting through the MA
Monitoring		MS, national, regional, local level authorities, public or private organisations - appointed by the MS. Actors acting mainly through the MC	Participation in MCs, but - depending on the country -, having different power of legitimacy. Role from consultation to equal voting right.
Evaluation	Ex-ante evaluation	MS or MA, MC, partners	Consultative role, or acting through the MA or the MC
	Mid-Term evaluation	Independent evaluator under supervision of the MA, in cooperation with the COM and the MS	Consultative role, or acting through the MA or the MC
	Ex-post evaluation	Independent evaluator under supervision of the COM, in cooperation with the MS and the MA	Consultative role, or acting through the MA

6 As acknowledged in the paper itself, it should be noted here that the contents of the paper were not subject to any independent verification

7 i.e. the eight partners officially selected by the Commission for consultations (CEEP (Centre européen des entreprises à participation publique et des entreprises d'intérêt économique général) -CES (Confédération Européenne des Syndicats) -COPA-COGECA (Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de l'Union Européenne - Confédération Générale des Coopératives

The involvement of anti-poverty groups and organisations from the charity and voluntary sectors as partners in the Monitoring Committees is limited.

Concerning the actual working mechanisms of partnership, the paper highlights a number of interesting points.

Firstly, in general terms, partners are chosen by the managing authority who, on the basis of a number of elements (specific competences, potential contribution to the programme but too often also political affiliation and political/economic power), decides on the balance between them. In this context, the paper notes that **pre-determined procedures and legislative basis on the selection of partners seemed to exist only in 4 of the 14 Member States examined.**

Secondly, concerning programming phases, the paper reports that in around half of the Member States, partners participated in setting up indicators, targets, elaboration of projects criteria and selection of projects. Also, in over half of the Member States, partners participated in the elaboration of the programme complements.

Thirdly, socio-economic partners do not seem to be involved in the day-to-day implementation of SF except for a few cases where they had a consultative role.

Fourthly, in relation to the Monitoring Committees, the paper notes that participation mainly involves trade unions and employers' organisations and that it largely depends on the type of funds. The role of the partners in those committees often concerns the spread of information towards the public however, in most cases, they have participatory and voting rights as the other members.

Concerning the difficulties of partnership implementation, it seems that poorly coordinated institutional structures with overlapping competences can have a negative impact on participation and put off willing partners. At the same time, participation for example in Monitoring Committees can be discouraged by administrative burdens and time and capacity constraints (i.e. long and highly technical discussions during the meetings).

Agricoles de l'Union Européenne) -EUROCHAMBRES (Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry) -EUROPECHE (Association des Organisations Nationales d'Entreprises de Pêche de l'U.E) -UEAPME (Union Européenne de l'Artisanat et des petites et moyennes entreprises) -UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employer's Confederations of Europe) -European Women's Lobby)

Having described how partnership procedures at this level work in practice, it is now important to examine how and how far civil society is able to get involved in the process.

2.1.5. How far is Civil Society Heard in this Process?

Two recent publications contain relevant and up-to-date information. The Manual on the Management of European Union Structural Funds published by EAPN (European Anti Poverty Network, 2006), includes a snapshot of how partnership at this level works for a consistent group of old and new Member States. A report published by ECAS in 2004 (The Illusion of Inclusion), examined partnership implementation for EU pre-accession aid and the early negotiation for 2007–2013 in the east and central Europe new Member States. The picture emerging from those researches is very mixed.

As far as the first and second steps are concerned, the consultation on the wider strategy framework of the SF has been rather limited. Both on the Cohesion Report and the Guidelines, the Commission seem to have included only a limited number of organisations outside the public administration network⁸. As highlighted by Brian Harvey in the ECAS report, the Commission seems to have fallen short of its own minimum standards for consultations given that, for the programming of the 2007–2013 Structural Funds, there was **no evidence that civil society at EU level was consulted**, the Commission did not timely respond to requests for relevant documents, no consultation plan was drafted. Such lack of actual consultation with civil society was also evident when the Commission organised the Cohesion Forum in May 2004 where NGOs were not invited and had to negotiate admission on a case by case basis.

Consultation with civil society on the programming and implementation of the Structural Funds seems to be generally very poor.

Concerning the national level consultation, it seems that very few governments have in fact implemented the partnership principle beyond its limited interpretation of central government-regional, local authorities- social partners (which mainly includes organisations of employers and trade unions).

On the one hand, some good practices can be identified. For example, in the UK, civil society is indeed involved in the design and planning of the SF and it receives **technical assistance** to support its activities in the field. Another good example comes from the Czech

⁸ i.e. the eight official partners already mentioned.

Partnership is a very good concept, which however still needs to be worked on from the point of view of implementation.

Republic where civil society organisations were largely accepted as partners and were involved in the drafting of the National Strategic Reference Framework and National Development Plan for 2007-2013. For the 2004-2006 period, Czech NGOs were included in working groups preparing the funds and then in monitoring committees. NGOs also in other countries managed to get seats in the Monitoring Committees (for example Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary). On the other hand, the evidence concerning civil society's organisations participation at this level of partnership is very fragmented and not coherent. In spite of the good examples highlighted, the civil society involvement in the SF as full partners is rather disappointing. No government seemed to have a **clear consultation plan or strategy**. Very often the time allowed for consultation was too short. When consultation did take place, it was very often either on specific issues and not on the overall plans or it was a formality without much content or an actual intention to listen to the propositions to amend documents accordingly. In some cases, documents were changed at the last minute without allowing any further consultation⁹.

But why should governments (at various levels) bother to work on improving the quality of partnership and include civil society in its implementation? The next paragraphs will try to give an answer to this question by analysing the benefits and weaknesses of partnership.

2.1.6. Benefit of Partnership

The benefits of this type of partnership are potentially manifold. In fact, these benefits are not automatic but depend on a number of factors. If the partnership is successful then all (or most) of those positive elements will be produced. However, if the partnership is not successful then no positive aspects will be produced.

Effectiveness

Partnership is often regarded as having positive effects on the effectiveness of the programmes and in particular on their preparation and development and also on the selection of projects. In this field, **partnership seems to generally increase the appropriate**

⁹ For more best and bad practices please refer to the EAPN Manual on the Management of the EU Structural Funds and the ECAS report already cited.

and timely decision-making, the ability to absorb funds, the efficient management of resources and the acceptance of the programmes by the implicated actors (also because it helps identifying the real local needs).

Legitimacy, transparency and dynamism

It is often argued that partnership increases the quality of decisions and decision-making processes. For example, partnership tends to improve co-ordination across organisational boundaries including the avoidance of duplication of efforts. Partnership at this level seems to reinforce innovation and stimulate learning across organisational boundaries. In fact, it can be argued that partnership is a bottom-up type of approach which, by replacing more traditional top-down and distant decision-making with decisions and solutions created and owned locally, it can avoid institutional inertia by adding up to **innovation and flexibility**.

Another important aspect concerns the influence that civil society participation can have on the strategy development and implementation of the funds. Ultimately the funds would more easily reach those groups of society who need them most.

Also, civil society' participation (particularly in selection of projects and monitoring) could ensure a better use of the funds and **reduce cases of misuse and fraud**. A very good example in this area is found in the CEE Bankwatch Network, Friends of the Earth Europe report¹⁰. A corruption scandal in Slovakia involving a misuse of EU pre-accession funds brought a group of NGOs representative together to form a national NGO watchdog. The group proposed new legal measures to prevent misuse, corruption and conflict of interest in the management of the funds which were accepted and implemented by the Slovak government and made compulsory for the managing authorities.

Institutional capacity

Finally, another very important but highly controversial point is the impact of partnership on the **development of institutional**

Partnership increases the legitimacy and transparency of decision-making and it has positive impact on the quality of analysis, planning and choices of priorities.

Civil society's attention to social issues can avoid too much focus on infrastructure and hard projects by keeping social objectives on the agenda.

¹⁰ CEE Bankwatch Network, Friends of the Earth Europe "Public eye on the EU funds – Civil society involvement in the structural, cohesion and rural development funds" April 2005

capacity. Certainly, local partnership development and transfer of good practices across different institutional settings can have a very positive impact. However, a more controversial point concerns whether partnership has significant effects on institutional reforms particularly from the point of view of accelerating decentralisation processes in the Member States. This is a very delicate question. On the one hand, current decentralisation processes in several EU Member States (France, Italy, UK, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, etc) are the result of several factors such as the centrifugal forces generated by phenomena like globalisation, which are raising a number of questions (i.e. the necessity for industrial restructuring, growing social exclusion etc.) and which are seen as being better tackled through territorially-based policies. Also, another factor to be taken into account is the shift in the consideration of bottom-up approaches as the best response in terms of public policy (industrial change, employment etc.) since they are believed to be more flexible, targeted, integrated and strategic. Surely, decentralisation is not simply generated by the existence or setting up of partnership. However, decentralisation processes are reinforced and accelerated by partnership “processes”. For example, in some cases the partnership principle at the EU level has “forced” some Member States to “invent” a regional tier of government. In other Member States, the Partnership Principle has found an easier application since it relied on pre-existing institutional structures (e.g. Germany). Other examples are Poland where there are new talks of greater decentralisation or also Italy where the 1970s’ decentralisation process has been resumed and reinforced since the early 90s.

Overall it is probably reasonable to argue that the two processes have reinforced each other with partnership stimulating the involvement of different tier of government and other territorial actors into decision-making processes, and at the same time, different decentralisation processes and the evolution of regional and social policies shaping the form, structure and contents of strategic partnership.

2.1.7. Dangers and weaknesses

Given all the benefits of partnership at the strategic level, it is now necessary to examine its potential weaknesses and risks. Once again, the word “potential” is used because even though weaknesses and risks do exist, this does not mean that partnership always goes wrong

or that the stakes are so high that it is not worth going through the trouble of setting up partnerships. On the contrary, pointing out at the problems and risks provides a first basis for tackling them and improve the quality of partnership.

Partnership's potential problems are linked to its very essential structure i.e. forums of different bodies, which represent either different government levels or, in any case, different interests coming together to talk and take **common integrated decisions**. Hence, there are risks connected to the setting up of never-ending and inconclusive procedures creating chaos rather than practical arrangements.

There are also **risks of over-representation of strong interest** (for example strong economic partners) to the detriment of weaker actors. There are obvious potential difficulties in the dialogue with the real decision-makers and in particular with the Member States and also the Commission. For example, how can it be ensured that a decision taken at a round-table nationally is then pursued by the Member State at the round-table with the Commission? Surprisingly, the Commission itself is often not as open to dialogue as it could seem and it tends (for several political but also practical reasons) to privilege bigger organisations or institutions as "partners".

To a certain extent, good effective partnership is something that requires experience, skills and competences which are acquired only through time. Hence, if it is true that the maturity of partnership (in the sense of established relations based on mutual trust and respect) and partnership "capacity" (in terms of the skills necessary to be a partner) are essential to Partnership healthy functioning they are acquired only through time. This is also true for the definition of clear and recognised roles of the actors involved and the procedures and quality of governance structures.

However, this is not to say that the time and efforts spent in creating and improving partnership are not well spent. On the contrary, since partnership processes are learning-by-doing type of processes it is surely worth trying to learn from mistakes and successes and then trying again. At the same time, from the point of view of the organisation with a smaller role within strategic partnership it is surely worth making their voices heard and push for greater involvement and inclusiveness of partnership. This is what ECAS together with other organisations are doing at the EU level and of course this type

of lobby activity would be also very useful at national and local level to make sure all actors and interests are taken into account.

2.1.8. Tips for setting up and managing of successful strategic partnerships

The account given above concerning partnership at the strategic level, has given a good overview of its functioning but also of its main shortcomings and weaknesses. Civil society organisations should endeavour to improve this functioning and increasingly make their voices heard so as to gradually becoming a full partner whose contribution and role is recognised and valued.

This paragraph briefly summarises a number of practical tips for NGOs wishing to engage in advocacy work (both at the EU and national/regional level) to gain more visibility and obtain the role they deserve in the determination of development strategies within the SF.

Active participation

- Civil society organisations need to take a **pro-active approach** when it comes to getting involved in the political and operational elements of this partnership level. For example, civil society needs to fight to gain more seats in Monitoring Committees. A proactive approach in this field would mean for example: -getting in touch with active members of monitoring committees –creating links and making their voice heard with those determining the compositions of those committees (national and regional authorities, managing authorities etc.) –always seek to get the reports of the committees –bring to the attention of relevant higher authorities any lack of transparency and refusals to consult.

Information

- Civil society organisation should always make sure they have the relevant and most updated documents as early as possible in the process (e.g. early drafts of National Strategic Reference Frameworks, EU documents such as the Community Strategic Guidelines or policy documents such as the Cohesion Reports etc.). For this, interested organisations should keep close contacts with other organisations (for example at a higher geographical level) and create networks for exchanging information, ideas and documents. They should also identify the most common sources of this information

Civil society organizations need to become involved in the discussion and drawing up of the EU and national strategy

(e.g. websites but also desk officers responsible for external relations etc.). However, making sure relevant documents are read is not enough. Organisations should make sure they can also access critical assessments and analysis (however non-biased) of the relevant documents or policies. In practice, information activities also include researching and actively participating to debates by releasing various types of publications from press releases to policy documents and analysis. These research activities can be very important and can support other essential activities such as advocacy work but also networking.

Advocacy work

- On the basis of the information gathered, organisations should arrange advocacy activities even better if in collaboration with other organisations or within the same network they use for information exchanges. National organisations are key actors in this activity. On the one hand, they should support and at the same time gain knowledge from EU level organisations and networks in the developments of their relations with EU institutions. On the other hand, they should work together at national level to pressure national, regional and local institutions to involve them during the early phases of strategy development.

What should be the aim of this advocacy work? From the very practical point of view, advocacy and lobbying activities should aim at encouraging the institutions in charge of determining development strategies to organise **consultations as far reaching as possible**. The composition of the partners involved should not be the only focus of advocacy activities in this field. For consultations to be effective, institutions would need to implement a feasible plan which should include:

- The setting up of a consultation plan with clear aims and deadlines
- The setting up of effective communication strategies (e.g. well advertised websites where documents would be made available, press releases etc.)
- Sufficient time should be given to participating organisations to digest the relevant documents and draw up comments and recommendations

- Sufficient time should be allowed for organisations to react at each phase of the policy-making process
- The results of the consultations should be organised into reports and made available to the public

Networking and coalition building

- As the arguments in the above paragraphs show, effective networking underlies most useful activities. Very often institutions at various levels (EU, national, regional and local) claim that, being the civil society sector extremely fragmented and characterised by small and very small organisations representing too fragmented interests, they do not have the resources to consult with them. This argument should no longer be allowed to be an excuse for “closed doors” decisions. Networking, with the coordination and cooperation it entails, is the most effective means to reach sufficient critical mass so that the institutions would listen and take into account what they hear.

Networking is an essential activity which is closely connected to other important activities and can maximise the organisations’ work. Established but also loose networks (i.e. networks based on contacts) can be very useful for sharing information, ensuring your organisation is aware of the latest news etc. Networking activities by civil society organisations should be pursued in two different ways. “**Electronic Networking**” is a very effective, cheap and time-saving way of connecting an organisation to others working in similar fields. This type of networking enables organisations and people far from each other to join efforts, work together and share ideas and experiences. However, the electronic networking cannot and should not replace the more traditional face-to-face networking. Direct communication and **face-to-face contacts** are extremely important. To be effective, electronic networking should follow direct meetings and contacts. Hence, organizations should also make sure that some of their funds are earmarked for networking activities. A budget line in their overall budgets should not only cover the costs of sending key staff members to events and conferences but also meetings which could provide new important contacts to the organization.

Annex I provides a useful list of civil society networks working at EU level, which interested organizations may contact for further infor-

mation on activities and membership. Finally, Annex II includes a few examples of networking activities carried out in EU neighbouring countries.

Support and fundraising

- For organisations to be able to carry out all the activities mentioned, they would need significant support to be able not only to keep up with the workload involved (very often documents at this level are very technical and/or long) but also to find the financial resources to cover the costs related to participation. Hence, in the framework of the advocacy activities mentioned above, organisations should push for the implementation of special financial schemes to allow them to participate as full partners. One very good example of such financial scheme is **Global Grants**. This type of grant is a very flexible financial instrument providing support to civil society organisations. This system was for example adopted in the Czech Republic during the 2000-2006 implementation of pre-accession aid and has proved to be a very successful tool in enabling civil society to participate actively.

Organisations of civil society need to be eligible for technical assistance.

2.1.9. Examples of Strategic Partnership from EU Neighbouring Countries

This section briefly summarises two experiences of strategic partnership carried out in Serbia.

Case Serbia: The Sunny Settlement in Novi Sad

The “Sunny Settlement” in Novi Sad hosts a Roma community of around 62 families. The living conditions of these families are rather poor (unemployment, no legalised residence, very limited services in terms of public lightening, water supply, transportation to bring children to the nearest school). To start solving these problems, a local NGO (i.e. EHO – Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisations) organised a series of forums on “Perspectives on Sunny Settlement”. The aim of the Forum was to:

- Solve basic problems of the settlement concerning legal issues and basic infrastructure
- Improve communication between the inhabitants of the settlement and the local public institutions.

Hence, the Forum included 12 inhabitants of the settlement (democratically elected within the community), representatives of the local NGO sector, representatives of the local institutions and also the local media.

The Forum met 15 times. A number of important objectives were achieved. At the same time, the experience came across a number of difficulties which if, on the one hand, reduced the possibilities of positive outcomes, they, on the other hand, represent lessons learned to be aware of when implementing similar experiences in the future.

Positive outcomes and results

- the forum established cooperation between the NGO and public authority sectors to tackle local development problems.
- the forum helped building advocacy and lobbying capacities and know-how of the NGOs involved which was then made available too other local NGOs
- it increased awareness of local institutions concerning their responsibilities in solving local development problems
- 5 public wellspring and 20 public toilets were built and several inhabitants built plumbing facilities into their homes.
- houses were given street numbers

Negative aspects and lessons learned

- the working of the Forum brought to light the lack of competences and human resources of the town secretariat of Health and Social affairs. This meant low participation and engagement in the Forums activities
- the rigidity and high bureaucracy of the institutions
- the process was hindered by changes in government's political affiliation
- difficulties between the local institutions and the NGOs (mainly because of their religious affiliation)
- investment in the capacity building of the locals participating to the forum was insufficient. As a consequence, the communication and reporting systems were not well developed and this meant that the local community in the settlement was not well informed about the Forum activities.

- the NGOs involved (and particularly EHO) did not have sufficient know-how and skills and did not have an experienced member of staff working on the Forum
- there was no specific contact person taking care of the relations between the participating institutions and organisation

Finally, the participating organisations felt there was a need for linking with other Roma organisations at early stages and that to develop skills and knowledge, networking with other organisations (also abroad) was very important. In the case study report, EHO highlights that best practices in similar field would be very important but they are currently missing in the region.

Case Serbia: The Focus Vojvodina

The main aim of this project was to quantitatively and qualitative increase citizens participation in local public life. It involved 4 municipalities directly (i.e. Bac, Bela Crkva, Indjija, Subotica); however, it aimed at spreading the achieved knowledge, skills and know-how much more widely in the region.

The project included a number of activities ranging from training to study visits to hands-on experience. An important aspect which contributed to the success of the experience was the support and advice provided by the international partners (i.e. the Dutch, Polish and other central European partners) which have extensive experience in organising citizens participation and local governance tools and similar background (particularly the east European partners) in terms of the transition from a closed to an open democratic system.

During its implementation, the project ran into difficulties which have been successfully tackled. For example, because of the high number of partners, there were initial difficulties concerning the division of roles and tasks. It took a few months to clarify these points. To do this (and also to favour the development of all activities), the team established an effective communication system even though this was difficult in the beginning because of management differences -e.g. the NGOs sector was used to using e-mails for communication but that was not the case for the local institutions, the Dutch partners tended to plan activities much ahead than their local counterparts.

2.2. Project partnership

This type of partnership characterises the operational level. Hence, even though they have their own specific objectives to pursue, these objectives are normally placed in a wider context of priorities which have been determined by the partnership at the strategic level.

Partnerships at the operational level are set up to implement specific projects within wider and already established priorities.

Another aspect of this partnership is that it is usually set up to respond to specific regional/EU calls for proposal i.e. they are set up to develop a specific project. At the same time, it should also be recognised that there are more flexible ways of creating a partnership for example through a dialogue with other types of donors. For example, a project funded by a foundation may require a more flexible way of setting up a partnership.

2.2.1. Bodies Governing the Project Partnership

The essential bodies governing this type of Partnership are: the Steering Committee and the Project Team. Sometimes, there can also be a technical committee for projects involving more scientific issues where experts' advice is needed for the development and implementation of the project. The **Steering Committee** is the strategic and "political" body of a project. This Committee guides the development of a project. It is usually made up of high representatives of the partners directly involved in the project. In general terms, the Steering Committee has very important functions such as:

- determining the overall strategy of the project (for example providing new ideas but also new contacts and opportunities to be investigated)
- keeping contacts with for example the donors and the Monitoring Committee
- monitoring the activities implemented and giving advice, feedback and guidance

It is important to stress that, for how well a project proposal can be prepared, once it is approved and funding earmarked, the project will not necessarily follow pre-determined tracks. Hence, the role of the Steering Committee is fundamental since it helps the project team keep track of the project objectives and provides crucial advice if anything goes wrong.

A truly cross-sectoral and transnational partnership brings together very different knowledge and experience which, if organised coherently within the partnership and the project, can produce high quality projects, excellent results presenting significant innovative, integrated aspects and significant added value.

The **Project Team** is the other fundamental body of this type of Partnership. It is the body “collectively” responsible for the implementation of all the activities foreseen in the project. It is made up of operational key-figures from each partner organisation working on specific activities or tasks for which the organisation is responsible.

2.2.2. Benefits of Partnership

Why is the Commission giving so much importance to Partnership at this level? Why not simply earmark funding to one organisation asking them to carry out the work?

Firstly, cross-sectoral and transnational partnership can more easily achieve objectives which are of interest at the EU level and, as such, do not only benefit one specific community but several communities across the EU.

Moreover, the experiences acquired can be modelled and replicated as best practices (or bad practices to be avoided).

2.2.3. Dangers and weaknesses

However, project partnership can go very wrong if a number of factors and elements are not there. Considering EU funded projects, there is sometimes a tendency to create “ad hoc” partnerships around specific calls for tender to create specific “ad hoc” projects. In these cases a number of factors can in fact determine the failure of a project. Particularly important are aspects concerning the **commitment and motivation** of the partners involved and the staff working on the project. If a partnership is quickly put together with a narrow and opportunistic approach and just to win EU money, that partnership is likely to cause the failure of the project. Also if the right partner or staff with the required skills and competences are not selected, then the project will fail or at least go through major problems. A further problem is the poor coordination between partners. These problems are often connected to low capacities and competences of the partner organisations. Particularly important in this context are **management and organisational skills**.

All these negative aspects can affect the development of a project even though the project proposal in itself was perfectly done. This also happens because sometimes organisations involve external

In EU and non-EU projects, the partnership (its composition, structure and functioning), is the real determinant of success.

experts to prepare project applications but then they are left alone to manage the project. This aspect should be avoided by making sure that the staff members of the partnership, who will work on the project if the call is won, either prepare the proposal themselves or follow very closely and contribute to the work of the expert.

2.2.4. Tips for setting up and managing successful project partnerships

When setting up a partnership it is fundamental to pay attention to how the partnership is set up, how partners are selected etc.

What can be done to reduce risks to a minimum and ensure that a partnership (and a project) is successful? Organisations intending to set up a partnership to respond to a call or propose a project to a foundation should ensure that a number of things are taken into consideration. A few practical tips for setting up successful project partnership concerns:

The compositions of the partnership

Carefully choosing partners is key to success. Partners in the partnership should have the required skills and knowledge (language skills should not be underestimated).

The Lead-partner needs true and effective management skills.

The partnership needs to be sufficiently cross-sectoral. Moreover, depending on the aim of the project, the partnership may need to be fully transnational. Overall, it is essential to keep in mind that the partnership should include a diversity of actors coming from different backgrounds (and, in the case of most European projects, different countries) bringing diverse experiences, competences and skills to the partnership.

The partnership should be result-driven.

Design and management of the project

The project should be designed on the basis of contributions from all the partners which will be later on involved in the implementation of the project.

On the one hand, the project leader has to be responsible for the overall implementation of the project and it will make sure every activity is implemented within the given deadlines and that it brings

the expected results. On the other hand, it might be a good idea if each partner is responsible for following in detail one activity of the project. In this way, the workload will be shared among the partners more evenly and, at the same time, the feeling of ownership of the project by all partners will be increased and might positively impact the results of the project.

For this strategy to be effective, tasks, roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and divided within the partnership. Moreover, each partner should be made responsible for tasks which closely reflect its expertise.

Also, the project leader will need to ensure that an effective internal **monitoring system** is in place. In the case of EU funded projects, this system may in fact be required anyway. For example, very often, for EU funded projects, there are monitoring forms which need to be filled in regularly by the partners. For non EU funded projects it would be advisable that the project leader follows this type of approach and introduces important monitoring tools such as the monitoring forms, checklists and timetables.

Effective Communication

A clear, permanent and well-functioning communication system needs to be put in place. Effective communication within the partnership is a fundamental aspect of a successful project. This can be achieved by using a number of tools:

A website devoted to the project would be a first important tool. This website should also include a restricted interactive area where partners can exchange ideas and information.

When planning the activities of the project, the partnership should clearly plan all occasions for meetings and the exchange of ideas concerning the project. This would mean for example that apart from the first kick-off meeting, each activity should be preceded by several exchanges between the partners (i.e. not only e-mails for the operational aspects of the activity but also conference calls for adjusting the strategy and direction of each activity) and followed as far as possible by a face-to-face meeting with all partners. Hence, when preparing the project proposal the partnership will need to devote sufficient funds for this important aspect of the project.

Networking

The importance of networking activities has already been highlighted in the paragraphs concerning the strategic partnership. However, networking is fundamental also in the project/operational partnership. To avoid repetitions, it should only be highlighted here that networking activities at this level of partnership can help organizations in their search for partners. With an effective network of contacts, organizations can find reliable and motivated partners more easily.

Even though some of these points may seem like common sense, it might be surprising to discover how much, in practice, they can determine the success or failure of a project.

2.2.5. Examples of Project partnership from EU neighbouring countries

This section briefly summarises a few project experiences from EU neighbouring countries. These examples are very interesting and they show how some of the aspects of partnerships discussed above can indeed determine the success or failure of a project. Each example tries to analyse both good and bad practices within the projects presented. Very often, in fact, a project (even the most successful) might present difficult elements and aspects from which to learn in the future.

Albania:

The Kaneta Parents' Council Empowerment project

This project focused on issues concerning human rights, children rights, trafficking prevention, awareness of drugs and alcohol abuse, illiteracy and school-parents partnerships.

It included three main activities: training courses, follow up to the trainings with "open" meetings and finally school activities.

The partnership at the basis of the project included three main partners: the Centre for Civil Society Development (CSDC), Peace Corps and "Jeta e Re" (a new local organisation). The project was well structured and the division of responsibilities and tasks was very clear. CSDC and Peace Corps designed the project and were responsible for running the training courses. "Jeta e Re" was responsible

for selecting participants from the parent council to attend the trainings and then organise open discussions with the wider community. Finally, the Parent Council (participating to the trainings) was responsible for organising activities with students (i.e. art contests on the subjects discussed during the trainings).

A report concerning this project highlights that initial problems within the partnership were related to poor communication. For example, “Jeta e Re” was tightly linked to another bigger organisation, however this was not clear to the other partners. Therefore, the other organisation was not fully aware of the project, which ended up being slowed down and activities were delayed. However, the partners managed to clarify these issues during the early implementation of the project and even though they had to re-organise the activities (and reduce the open meeting from two to only one after each training), they were then able to run the project smoothly.

Macedonia: Kicevo Cultural Summer

Kicevo is a town situated in western Macedonia where a number of different ethnic groups live together (i.e. Albanians, Macedonians, Rom and Turkish). The city is going through significant industrial decline which has created unemployment and consequent social tensions in the area.

The local NGO support centre has attempted to organise a cultural event (i.e. a “cultural summer”) by bringing together several other local actors from other NGOs to local business, institutions and government. However, the organisation of this event came across a number of difficulties, ranging from lack of know-how to communications and problem-solving skills which determined the failure of the initiative. The NGOs involved seemed unable to effectively communicate with each other and work together. The lack of interest from the local public authorities and the negative response from the business sector also hindered the organisation of the Kicevo Cultural Summer 2004.

Montenegro: Youth project in Podgorica

Podgorica (as the whole of Montenegro) is characterised by significant ethnic, social, religious and cultural diversity. To favour integration and peaceful cohabitation of people with such different backgrounds in the same region, the centre for Civic Education

designed a project for youngsters of the town to learn how to understand, respect and live peacefully with different groups. The main idea of the project was to bring young people with different backgrounds together to discuss and talk with each other to create new communication channels, exchange experiences and learn from each other. Other partners in this project included local schools (in charge of selecting the participants and support the informal learning method of the project) and the local institutions (in charge of hosting the students for visits).

However, the partnership was rather weak. The schools did not engage in the project as much as was initially planned. This meant a lack of a wider advertisement of the initiative and a more difficult selection of the students. The NGOs also had initial collaboration difficulties with the local public authorities. These difficulties are the sign of a much bigger problem of lack of collaboration between the two sectors. This problem was overcome through personal contacts and previously established relations.

In spite of these problems, the project was very successful and the response from the participants was very positive. The project team is now thinking of implementing the project on a wider scale. As illustrated in a report of the experience, the project team is well aware of the problems encountered at this smaller level, thus they will pay greater attention to the composition of the partnership and fully involve each partner in the project.

3. TERRITORIAL PACTS: A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP

Territorial pacts are a very interesting illustration of partnership. A brief analysis of territorial pacts is included in this paper because it can give very good insights and tips on how successful partnerships could be set up. Yet it is important to mention that **territorial pacts are a very peculiar case**. They represent an example of partnership cutting across the two levels described above (i.e. strategic and operational). In several cases (and especially for the early experimentations of the pacts) the partnerships involved in territorial pacts did not simply respond to already set up calls for projects. Instead, they were truly **bottom up approaches**, which involved the setting up of priorities and strategies. Hence, the partnerships at the basis of the pacts were not purely operational but in most cases contributed to the determination of development strategies.

Territorial pacts had an essentially local dimension. However, they were drafted either nationally or at the European level (but on the basis of inputs and analysis from local actors). In fact, they are usually divided in national and European pacts according to the level involved and the main source of co-funding.

The basic idea of the territorial pacts consisted in the attempt to favour economic development through interventions which could stimulate, with financial incentives, local public and private actors to work together to design **integrated local development projects**. The aim of this cooperation would be the production of “collective goods” which would closely relate to and satisfy the specific needs of the local economy in which they are created. Such “collective goods” could be either services (i.e. training, marketing, technological transfers etc.) or actual public goods (like infrastructure).

Good and bad practices derived from the experience of the territorial pacts can be used as benchmarks for how partnership can, should or indeed should not be used.

Territorial pacts are based on the idea that local development objectives cannot be achieved without the mobilisation and responsabilisation of local actors.

On the one hand, public authorities lack adequate information to be able to effectively intervene on local economies (for example as consequence of internal fragmentation of competences and responsibilities). On the other hand, private actors often do not have sufficient resources or even the motivation (especially in poor or economically deprived areas), to invest in needed innovation or new activities given the high risks associated with them (which increase when public goods availability and production –such as services and infrastructure- are low).

The policy strategy underlining the pacts aims to create a bridge between these two elements. By creating cooperation and exchanges, the pacts can **coordinate the public and private interests and actions**, ultimately allowing for more effective development activities.

The experience of territorial pacts has showed several interesting points concerning the dynamics of partnership in development strategies and projects. As already mentioned, the pacts had an essential local dimension. However, the most successful pacts were those where the higher levels of political/economic governance (regions, national governments and EU institutions) were fully involved. Prof. Trigilia argues that the local level, left to work on its own might not be able (because of economic and social constraints) to develop and fully implement successful development strategies. For those to work effectively, the presence of the higher levels of governance to act as motivators and “opportunity providers” as well as monitoring and evaluation actors is essential. However, the mobilisation and direct involvement of local actors into a bottom-up type of approach to the pact is crucial.

Territorial pacts have been criticised in the past because (it was argued), they did not deliver the results expected. However, the added value of the pacts is not always quantifiable in purely economic terms (e.g. number of jobs created, amounts of further investments raised). In evaluating the pacts it is important to also consider less tangible results such as the degree of integration of the various activities; the strengthening of the institutional capacity of local administrations, the changing approach and attitude of local actors towards the development of their local context (in terms of more accountability and direct responsibility of the actions taken and activities implemented).

Empirical studies show that there is a core number of pacts which have had very good results (both tangible and intangible) and which provide best practices to be followed. A research conducted by the Italian Ministry for Economics on a number of territorial pacts (19 out of a total of 60), highlighted some interesting points. The research showed different performances for different pacts and tried to analyse the reasons behind this.

The so-called European territorial pacts (i.e. those financed by the EU through the Structural Funds —mainly the ESF) performed better than the national ones. Within the national ones, the first generation of pacts achieved far better results than those implemented later on (second generation).

These differences are explained by a number of elements. Firstly, the European pacts had much clearer procedures (for example for expenditure) and clear deadlines. The national pacts saw legislation being changed during their implementation and their responsibility within the national authorities was shifted more than once from one department to another.

Interestingly enough, the degree of local economic development did not seem to be an issue since very successful pacts took place in poor and socially troubled areas (for example areas with high concentration of crimes and where mafia groups had a tight grip on the local context).

The research found that a key aspect for the success of the pact was the partnership that created the pact. The European and first generation pacts were characterised by a much greater mobilisation of the local society which had an important impact on the quality of the strategies and projects set up, created a strong sense of ownership locally and positively influenced the results of the projects.

3.1. Examples of territorial pacts as best practices

3.1.1. Territorial Pact: Alto Belice Corleonese — Italy

The Alto Belice Corleonese is an area in the north-west of Sicily (close to Palermo) well known for being one of the main “headquarters” of organised crime groups (mafia). Its territory includes around 20 towns with around 120.000 inhabitants. In the mid 90s the area was

characterised by serious economic backwardness and social distress (low income levels, high unemployment etc.). During this period, the towns' mayors organised a number of meetings and set up a networking group among the administrations. In this context they decided to launch a territorial pact in the area. The preparation of the pact and decisions concerning the measures and activities it should implement, were taken within the "Institutional and Social Assembly" of the pact. This Assembly included a great variety of actors ranging from the local authorities themselves to economic and social actors. The Assembly collectively decided on the interventions to be included in the pact (ranging from new infrastructure to local services and private investments). In 1997, when the procedure for national funding was about to start, the pact was selected to become one of the European territorial pacts to be directly co-funded by the EU. In 1998 the pact was approved and the partnership for the management of the pact was formed. This partnership included representatives from the institutions, organisations and companies that had contributed to the preparation of the pact. Hence, a strong continuity existed between the preparation and management of the pact. By 2001 all investments planned were attained. On the one hand, the utilisation of all earmarked funds could be considered as an important achievement of the pact. On the other hand, this was not by far the greatest achievement of the pact. Funds were not only spent but they were very well spent.

The measures and activities implemented through the pact were concentrated around three main themes:

- Agro-food sector and traditional crafts
- Strengthening the local civil society and social ties
- Make better use of natural and cultural resources

Around those areas, a number of actions were taken ranging from financial incentives to local firms and public investments in infrastructure. The integrated approach used to plan the actions was decisive for the success of the pact. So, for example, the entrepreneurial projects co-financed were accompanied by investments to create, improve and equip industrial or crafts sites. Support to "agriturismi"¹¹ was coupled with the creation and the equipment of

¹¹ Agriturismo is a structure providing accommodation and restaurant services to tourists. It usually consists of a traditional renovated building situated in the middle of the countryside where the food served is organic and it is cultivated and produced on site.

naturalistic walks and the restoration of old section of railway tracks, the renovation of monument sites, land reclaim and equipment of areas for sports and leisure activities. Overall, the pact financed 125 private initiatives with a total of 65 billion Liras of which two thirds from public contributions. 44 were the public projects financed with a total of 20 billion Liras. Besides the more quantifiable results (in terms of hard infrastructure built, jobs created –i.e. around 400 etc.) the pact had other very important consequences. For example, the cooperation around the pact by bringing together public, private and civil society's bodies created momentum for discussing the problems of the area and brought signature to a number of important agreements concerning the local context and how to tackle its socio-economic problems. The most relevant agreements concerned the distribution of infrastructure within the territory, the monitoring of mafia infiltration in public funded works, the simplification of procedures for local firms to request licenses and authorisations, the setting up of an "enterprise office" providing assistance and services to firms and the establishment of a marketing trademark for local wine. Moreover, the cooperation initiated by the territorial pact was followed up with more dialogue and collaboration among the actors involved, which led to the creation of new experiences such as the agricultural pacts and the PIT (Territorial Integrated Pact – which was set up to manage EU funds). Those agreements and further cooperation show that the pact had positive long-term effects which need to be taken into account during evaluation.

3.1.2. Territorial Employment Pact: Saint Herblain – France

In general terms, the French pacts were not easily implemented because the bottom-up approach required by the pacts did not fit well into the traditionally centralised governance structure. This situation, coupled with the plurality of actors involved, determined significant differences in the results of the pacts. Even though the most important strategic body for the pacts was the National Agency for Employment (and its local branches), the management of the pacts was characterised by many different types of bodies, institutions and networks such as regions, municipalities, employment committees and also NGOs.

The Saint Herblain territorial employment pact is recognised as one of the most successful in the French experience of the pacts. Its strengths consisted in a number of elements.

Firstly, by taking a more dynamic approach (looking at employment in terms of economic development and not simply as matching labour demand and supply), the pact managed to differentiate its operation from more traditional employment institutions. Secondly, it managed to create a favourable atmosphere between the technical unit of the pact and the local businesses and stakeholders. Finally, the pact assumed a very peculiar structure which allowed significant flexibility, hence stimulating innovation and dynamic actions. To create new jobs, the pact activated a number of separate projects financed through specific budgets. These projects took the legal form of NGOs which meant that each project was governed by a specific organisation. The idea was to make the pact look like a task force for partnership and innovation and not simply an administrative structure. In practice, the pact was highly decentralised which allowed for a broad base involvement of the local stakeholders in the management of the pact. This decentralised structure consisted of:

- the board of the organisation which was responsible for decisions taken within the pact
- the steering and working groups which were in charge of the preparation and implementation of the various projects

This structure was essentially horizontal, with the board and the steering group looking at new actions, opportunities, and the working and pilot groups, the composition of which depended on the specific action, working on the already set up actions. However, it should also be noticed that the local stakeholders were fully involved in the programming of actions as well.

This peculiar structure allowed the pact to differentiate itself from more institutionalised systems, hence could operate in very innovative ways, implementing non-traditional tools and could look at the quality, not only the quantity of jobs created.

For example, by taking the integrated approach of looking at both demand and supply sides of the labour market, the pact implemented innovative activities such as, for example, the “services boutiques” (created within big commercial shopping centres) and

the “employers clusters” which combined part time work to create full time jobs (the argument being that part time jobs do not create a good relationship between the employers and the employees and prevent the increase of human capital).

Concerning the outcomes of this pact we should look at both direct and indirect results:

Direct outcomes

- Consolidation and enlargement of local partnerships
- Concerted design of action plans
- Dissemination of a project-based approach
- Creation of new companies through specific workshops and tutorages
- Development of new potential services and jobs
- Development of qualification
- Creation of a Local Initiative Platform

Indirect outcomes (impact on employment and economic development)

- 133 SMEs were created (against the 40 originally expected)
- 138 new jobs (against the 70 originally expected)
- 11 types of new labour contracts (against the 40 originally expected)

3.2. Tips on territorial pacts

The two case studies of territorial pacts were taken from the most successful examples. However, territorial pacts were not all successful and in several cases they plainly missed their objectives. Yet, this does not mean that the experience was overall negative. On the contrary, the territorial pacts have proved to be **useful innovative tools to tackle development problems.**

The experience of the pacts so far has showed that successful pacts can be set up on the initiative of different governance levels (from the European Commission to the national, regional or local levels). On the basis of the know-how and practices developed in the last ten years, new territorial pacts should be activated locally and civil society organisations should work closely with public administrations and other local stakeholders to set up new

Territorial pacts represent an example of partnership structure which should be used more widely at the local level to implement effective development policies.

projects based on the pacts experience. The following paragraphs will provide some useful tips which could be followed to ensure the success of the new pacts.

3.2.1. Integrated approach

This is a fundamental aspect of the pact. It highlights the necessity of drafting a solid plan, based on careful and in-depth analysis of the local context in which the pact would operate. Hence, this aspect primarily refers to the earlier phases of the pact when the strategy and the main objectives are set. This is a fundamental phase since the basis of the pact would be established and could influence the implementation and final results of the experience. To make sure this phase brings the necessary outcomes, the involved stakeholders should use a variety of instruments such as **SWOT analysis** (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats), they should organise a number of consultations, roundtables and discussions with local stakeholders and should not underestimate the possibility of resorting to experts and technical assistance consultants.

An integrated approach is based on the importance of looking at the territory as a whole and at the interconnections of the various economic and social problems.

3.2.2. Effective involvement of a variety of actors including those closer to the grass-roots of the local society

As already hinted at in the previous paragraph, the involvement of all relevant local actors is a very important aspect of the pact. Firstly, contributions from actors other than the local authorities, local business and labour organisations can add new perspectives to the analysis of the local needs. Secondly, the involvement of the grass-roots of the local society (by for example involving the organisations working closely with the citizens) can increase the feeling of ownership of the pact and hence facilitate the acceptance of any necessary changes (e.g. from the building of local infrastructure to changes in standard contracts etc.).

3.2.3. Strong leadership

On the one hand, decisions need to be taken collectively and the contents of the pact can only be determined taking into

consideration all the contributions from the bottom. On the other hand, the pact needs to be guided by a body or institution (often the public institution involved would be best placed to take on this role) which should act as motivator, but at the same time should monitor the development of the activities. In some of the Italian pacts this role was taken on by the city mayors themselves. Their enthusiasm concerning the experience and their focus on making a change for the better in their territory seem to have significantly contributed in keeping the partnership together and focused on the results of the pacts. To ensure this happens, the relevant public authorities should be fully part of all the phases of the pact from design to implementation.

Hence organisations wishing to promote this type of experience should seek the **involvement and a constant dialogue with the relevant institutions**. From their part, the public authorities involved should make sure that the responsibility for the pact is not shifted from one department to another and that the same contact person follows the experience throughout.

Co-funding

An important strength of the strategy underlying the territorial pacts was the **mixed source of funding**. While public funding of course represented the bigger part of the investment, private funding was indeed significantly involved. Financial contributions from the private sector (as percentage of the overall expenditure), have positive impacts in different ways. For example, they can increase the motivation of the actors and increase their commitment to the pact. Also, they can favour a more down-to-earth approach and more realistic discussions on what can really be done with the resources available ultimately contributing to making the most out of the resources. For some of the civil society organisations, the issue of co-funding can be a tricky problem. They might not be able to significantly invest in the experience as other type of organisations can do (i.e. businesses and private sectors). However, their contribution to the process is essential. Hence, they should be enabled to participate and if on the one hand they should, to some extent, benefit from investments (e.g. access to technical assistance etc.) they should, on the other hand, also contribute with their own resources (particularly when it comes to at least partially covering the work of the staff members).

Several pacts have showed that while broad participation of local stakeholders is essential, a strong leadership is as important.

3.2.5. Clear plans, timetables and deadlines for the utilisation of funds and implementation of activities

On the more operational and practical level, there are a number of aspects which need to be considered when setting up and implementing a territorial pact (and also other types of development projects). Once the main objectives and the correlated activities have been determined, the partnership should **fix clear but feasible deadlines**. Within these deadlines, there should be clear timetables leaving sufficient time to implement each activity or sub-activity, also taking into consideration unforeseen delays. Deadlines should relate also to the utilisation of the funds. This approach will surely contribute to the efficiency of the pact.

Short list of civil society's networks

Social

The Platform of European Social NGOs

The Social Platform was established in 1995 and brings together more than forty European non-governmental organisations, federations and networks which are working to build an inclusive society and promote the social dimension of the European Union.

The members of the Social Platform represent thousands of organisations, associations and voluntary groups at local, regional, national and European level representing the interests of a wide range of civil society. These include organisations of women, older people, people with disabilities, people who are unemployed, people affected by poverty, gays and lesbians, young people, children and families. Member organisations also include those campaigning on issues such as social justice, homelessness, life-long learning, health and reproductive rights and racism.

Address :

Square de Meeûs 18

B-1050 Brussels

Tel. +32 2 511 37 14

Fax. +32 2 511 19 09

E-mail: platform@socialplatform.org

Development

Concord

CONCORD is the European NGOs Confederation for Relief and Development. Its 18 international networks and 19 national associations from the European Member States and the candidate countries represent more than 1500 European NGOs vis-à-vis the European Institutions.

The main objective of the Confederation is to enhance the impact of European development NGOs vis-à-vis the European Institutions by combining expertise and representation.

Address:

Square Ambiorix 10
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: secretariat@concordeurope.org
Website: www.concordeurope.org

Community Development Foundation

The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is a non-departmental public body supported by the Active Community Unit of the Home Office with substantial support from local government, charitable trusts and the private sector. Its role is to pioneer, study and promote new forms of community development, in order to inform public policy, professional practice and community initiatives.

Address:

60 Highbury Grove,
London N5 2AG
Tel: +44 20 7226 5375
Fax: +44 20 7704 0313
E-mail: admin@cdf.org.uk
Website: www.cdf.org.uk

EURADA – European Association of Development Agencies

EURADA, the Association of Regional Development Agencies, is a non profit-making organisation aiming to promote regional economic development through dialogue with the European Commission services, interchange of good practice among members, transnational co-operation among members, regional development agencies as a concept. EURADA gathers around 150 development agencies from 25 countries of both the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe.

Address:

Avenue des Arts, 12 - Bte 7
B - 1210 Bruxelles
Tel. +32 2 218 43 13
Fax. +32 2 218 45 83
E-mail: info@eurada.org
Website: www.eurada.org

EURODAD - European Network on Debt and Development

Eurodad is a network of 48 development non-governmental organisations from 15 European countries working for national economic and international financing policies that achieve poverty eradication and the empowerment of the poor. By coordinating our knowledge and resources, we aim to make our campaigns, outreach, advocacy and programmes on the key areas of Debt and Finance, Poverty Reduction Policies, and Empowerment more effective.

Website: www.eurodad.org

Children and youth networks

European Forum for Child Welfare

Organisation aims and activities: To raise the profile of Child Welfare with the European Institutions and to promote high quality practice throughout Europe. Activities include studies, newsletter, promotion of partnerships, conferences and other publications.

The European Forum for Child Welfare's aim is to improve the quality of life for children and young people in the European Union, and in particular:

- to ensure services for children in need and especially for those children whose rights are violated by individuals and/or States of the EU;
- to assist European Institutions to understand children's needs and respond appropriately.

EFCW members work with children and young people between the ages 0 - 21 years.

Address:

rue Defacqz, 1

B-1050 BRUXELLES

Tél.: 32-2-534.55.47

Fax: 32-2-534.52.75

Email: efcw@dproducts.be

Website: www.eurplace.org/orga/efcw

The European Children's Network – EURONET

EURONET - The European children's Network - is a coalition of networks and organisations campaigning for the interests and rights of children (defined in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as all persons under 18 years of age). They share a common

concern that children as a group are 'invisible' within the European Union and that the EU develops legislation, policy, and programmes without taking sufficient - or in many cases any - account of children's rights or interests.

Address:

Rue Montoyer 39
1000 Brussels
Belgium
tel. +32 2 512 4500
fax. +32 2 513 4903
E-mail: europeanchildrennetwork@skynet.be
Website: www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org

Europe's Children – Our Concern (ECOC)

Europe's Children-Our Concern (EC-OC) is a voluntary human rights based organisation which aims to help children and young people with learning difficulties living within Europe.

An ever-increasing number of people in Europe live outside their country of origin. Many of them - adults and children - form part of the estimated 10% of people who have some form of learning difficulty. For these people, living in a country where the education system is not in their mother tongue, finding help is often very difficult. EC-OC aims to help these children and their parents by organising training sessions for parents, teachers and other professionals, on detection, assessment, support and therapy;

Address:

Europe's Children Our Concern
40 Rue Washington
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel : +32 2 537 4836
Fax : +32 2 537 4836
E-mail : ecoc@ecoc.be
Website: www.ecoc.be

Environment

Friends of the Earth, European Coordination (CEAT)

Friends of the Earth International is the world's largest grassroots environmental network uniting 73 national member organisa-

tions and some 5,000 local activist groups on every continent. Its European branch is the largest grassroots environmental network in Europe united by a common belief in strong grassroots activism and effective national and international advocacy. FoE Europe influences European and EU policy and raises public awareness on environmental issues by providing institutions, media and the public with regular information via a wide range of campaigns, publications and events. It supports the network with representation, advice and coordination in European and EU policy making, and sharing of knowledge, skills, tools and resources and enables people to participate in its international campaigns through local activist groups and national organisations in more than 30 European countries.

Address:

Rue Blanche 15,
B-1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 542 0180
Fax: +32 2 537 5596
E-mail: info@foeeurope.org
Website: www.foeeurope.org

European Environmental Bureau (EEB/BEE)

The EEB is a federation of 143 environmental citizens' organisations based in 31 countries: all EU Member States and most Accession Countries, as well as in a few neighbouring countries. These organisations range from local and national, to European and international. The aim of the EEB is to protect and improve the environment of Europe and to enable the citizens of Europe to play their part in achieving that goal.

Address:

34 Boulevard de Waterloo
B – 1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 289 10 90
Fax: +32 2 289 10 99
E-mail: secretariat@eeb.org
Website: www.eeb.org

Climate Action Network Europe (CAN)

The Climate Action Network (CAN) is a worldwide network of over 365 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working to promote government, private sector and individual action to limit human-

induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.

Climate Action Network Europe (CAN-Europe) is a non-profit organisation operating as a coordination office since 1989 for environmental groups in Western Europe (European Union, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland) working on climate change issues. It provides a forum for NGOs to share ideas and expertise, strategies and information on climate change, promote actions and link these with wider efforts.

Address:

Rue de la Charite, 48
1210, Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0) 2 229 52 20
Fax: +32 (0) 2 229 52 29
E-mail : info@climnet.org
Website: www.climnet.org

Consumers

The European Consumers' Organisation – BEUC

BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation, is the Brussels based federation of 36 independent national consumer organisations from the EU, accession and EEA countries. Its job is to try to influence, in the consumer interest, the development of EU policy and to promote and defend the interests of all European consumers.

Mission of BEUC is making the European consumers' voice heard.

Address:

Avenue de Tervueren 36 Bte 4
B – 1040 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 743 15 90
Fax: +32 2 740 28 02
Email: consumers@beuc.org
Website: www.beuc.org

European Community of Consumer Co-operatives - Euro Coop

Euro Coop is the European community of consumer cooperatives, with Secretariat based in Brussels. Its members are the national organisations of consumer cooperatives in 18 European countries. Today it represents over 3,200 local and regional cooperatives, the members of which amount to more than 22 million consumers across Europe.

Address:

Rue Archimède, 17
B 1000, Brussels
Tel: +322850070
Fax: +3222310757
Email: info@eurocoop.coop
Website: www.europcoop.org

European Consumer Safety Association - ECOSA

ECOSA, the European Consumer Safety Association, promotes an exchange of knowledge and good practice among experts and institutes in the field of consumer safety. ECOSA was established in 1985 as a non-profit organisation to promote safety. The founding members were senior representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations with expertise in the field of consumer safety and the promotion of home and leisure safety.

The objective is to have in all member states of an enlarged European Union, and in most of the other countries in the European region, a national action plan for safety by 2010. The ultimate goal is to have a significant reduction in death and injuries due to accidents achieved by 202

Address:

Rijswijkstraat 2
1059 GK Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 20 511 4513
Fax: + 31 20 511 4510
Email: secretariat@ecosa.org
Website: www.ecosa.org

Women

Centre for Research on European Women - CREW

Founded in 1980 by a group of nine women from different EU member states, CREW has wide knowledge and expertise in all aspects of equal opportunities, training and enterprise creation. It is an independent consultancy, research and information centre specialising in the development and management of human resources in the EU. CREW was originally set up to respond to the need for more information on equal opportunities policies formulated and adopted in Brussels, which were affecting the lives of women across Europe. Its

target public has always been policy makers, institutions, employers and women's groups whom it has informed and influenced over the years through its publications and activities

Address:

38, Rue Stevin
1040 Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: mail@crew.be

The European Women's Lobby - EWL

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest co-ordinating body of national and European non-governmental women's organisations in the European Union, with over 3000 member associations in the 15 Member States. The EWL's goal is to achieve equality of women and men in Europe and to serve as a link between political decision-makers and women's organisations at EU level. The EWL was created in September 1990 as a result of several years work by individuals and groups who felt that the time had come for women to be represented at the highest political levels.

The EWL's goal is to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to serve as a link between political decision-makers and women's organisations, which represent the majority in civil society. The aim of the Lobby is to achieve equal treatment and opportunity for women across the European Union. The objectives of the EWL are the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men and the defense of the interests of women living in the Member States of the European Union, including migrants, ethnic minorities and the most vulnerable and marginalised groups within society, in the context of a united and democratic Europe.

Website: www.womenlobby.org

People with disabilities

European Disability Forum - EDF

EDF is a European umbrella organisation representing more than 37 million disabled people in Europe. The European Disability Forum exists to represent disabled people in dialogue with the European Union and other European authorities. Its mission is to promote equal opportunities for disabled people and to ensure disabled citizens' full access to fundamental and human rights through their active involvement in policy development and implementation in the European Union.

Address:

Rue du Commerce 39-41
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium.
Tel: +32-2-282 46 00
Fax: +32-2-282 46 09
E-mail: info@edf-feph.org
Website: www.edf-feph.org

Handicap International – HI

The objective of Handicap International is to support people in situations of disability or vulnerability, whatever may be the cause and the environment underlying that situation: extreme poverty, exclusion, deficient social and health systems, serious violation or denial of basic rights, natural disasters or violence and armed conflict.

Address:

Handicap International UK Waterman House
101-107 Chertsey Road
Woking, Surrey, GU21 5BW
Tel: 0870 774 3737
E-mail: hi-uk@hi-uk.org
Website: www.handicap-international.org.uk

Other

European Foundation Centre (EFC)

The EFC is an independent international association that promotes and underpins the work of foundations and corporate funders active in and with Europe. Established in 1989 by seven of Europe's leading foundations, the EFC today serves a core membership of more than 200 members, associates and subscribers; 350 community philanthropy initiatives; as well as a further 50,000 organisations linked through a network of 58 information and support centers worldwide. The EFC is a knowledge-based membership association dedicated to strengthening organised philanthropy, which is embedded in and supports civil society, in Europe and internationally.

Address:

51 rue de la Concorde
1050 Brussels, Belgium
tel.: +32.2.512.8938
fax: +32.2.512.3265
Website: www.efc.be

European Anti Poverty Network - EAPN

EAPN is a representative network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union. EAPN has consultative status with the Council of Europe, and is a founding member of the Platform of European Social NGOs. EAPN is a network of 16 national networks of voluntary organisations and grassroots groups active in the fight against poverty within each member state of the EU whose main activities are related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

E-mail: team@eapn.skynet.be

Website: www.eapn.org

The European Policy Centre

The European Policy Centre (EPC) is an independent, not-for-profit think-tank, committed to making European integration work. The EPC works at the 'cutting edge' of European policy-making providing its members and the wider public with rapid, high-quality information and analysis on the EU policy agenda. It aims to promote a balanced dialogue between the different constituencies of its membership, spanning all aspects of economic and social life.

Address:

Résidence Palace, 155 Rue de la Loi,

B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

Tel +32 (0)2 231 03 40

Fax +32 (0)2 231 07 04

E-mail : info@theepc.be

Website: www.theepc.be

WHO ARE WE?

ECAS was created in 1990 as an international non-profit organization, independent of political parties, commercial interests and the EU Institutions. Our mission is to enable NGOs and individuals to make their voice heard with the EU by providing advice on how to lobby, fundraise, and defend European citizenship rights.

We are a large cross-sectoral European association bringing together members from different areas of activities: civil liberties, culture, development, health and social welfare, as well as general civil society development agencies.

ECAS is located at 83 rue du Prince Royal, 1050 Brussels, with our documentation centre sharing premises with the European Foundation Centre (EFC) at 53 rue de la Concorde.

The Chairman is Mario Monti. The Director, Tony Venables, heads a staff of 12 people.

WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES?

ECAS's objectives are described under 3 C's:

C1. Civil Society

ECAS can take credit for enlarging NGO representation at European level, but the Institutions still appear remote, complex, and provide little guidance on the way they want to inter-relate with members of civil society. We can make the EU easy.

Our priorities are:

- Developing an electronic newsletter for members
- Training NGO representatives from the new member states and neighbouring countries to become EU specialists
- Promoting better access to the structural funds for NGOs

C2. Citizens free movement rights

ECAS is an advice service for individuals as well as NGOs. We run hotlines and our team of legal experts has handled over 50.000 complaints.

Our priorities are:

- To run the Citizen Signpost Service for the European Commission at a high level of quality and to help solve cross-border problems
- To promote better EU legislation for people rights when moving around the Union
- To organize conferences and develop co-operation among citizens advice services

C.3 Citizenship and governance

ECAS's first two objectives cannot be achieved without a third: A real change in the administrative culture of the Institutions to make them open and accountable to citizens.

Our priorities are:

- To inform citizens about the new Constitution and how it strengthens their European rights
- To develop policy research on transparency and communication between the EU and citizen
- To propose a European compact between civil society and the EU Institutions
- To campaign for genuine European citizenship

ARE YOU CONVINCED?

You may feel that ECAS responds to your needs, and that you can join a collective effort to further the cause of European civil society. If so, please consider becoming a member of ECAS.

For details contact us at: info@ecas.org

Please visit our Website at: www.ecas.org

Balkan Civil Society Development Network

is a network of 11 civil society and ecumenical organizations from 7 countries and territories in the Balkan region (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo).

Balkan Network's members are: Albanian Civil Society Foundation, Diaconia Agapes, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Women's Alliance for Development, Pokrov Foundation, Opportunity Associates Romania, AIDRom, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, NIT, EOS and We Are With You.

Background

Balkan Network was initiated in 2001 as Capacity Building Hub Programme, a part of a larger initiative called the WCC South-East Europe Ecumenical Partnership. By bringing together churches, ecumenical and civil society organizations, this initiative aimed at promoting their co-ordination and co-operation. The Capacity-Building Hub Programme focused on strengthening individual/staff and organizational capacities and skills of involved agencies.

The initial pilot programme ran from 2001 to 2003, in which 5 country visits and accompanying reports, 3 partnership meetings, 5 trainings, 7 exchange and consultancy visits were held and web training-directory and addressbook were published. Thus, Balkan Civil Society Development Network was launched in December 2003 as a result of successful cooperation in strengthening capacities of partner organizations.

Vision

Sustainable peace, harmony and prosperity of societies in the Balkan region.

Mission

Empowering civil society through sharing and developing local practices, concepts and strengthening civil society actors.

Goals and objectives

1. To increase communication with civil society actors in the region as a basis for bi/multilateral cooperation;
2. To increase mobilization of resources and support;
3. To increase knowledge and skills as a base for higher quality of our work;
4. To increase promotion of intercultural exchange and culture of resource-sharing as a base for efficient/effective network.

Activities

In the period 2003-2004, activities were directed at strengthening individual/staff and organizational capacities and skills of partner organizations through tailor-made packages of trainings, exchange and consultancies. As a result of these, a joint pool of trainers and courses has been established and capacities of all partners have been strengthened through exchange of best practices and information. While maintaining focus on individual/staff and organizational strengthening, network's activities in the period 2004-2006 are to focus on thematic cooperation through 3 common priority themes (EU funding, lobbying and advocacy; training and consultancy standards and ethics, resource mobilization) and specific themes (e.g. women and anti-trafficking; corporate social responsibility and anti-corruption; decentralization; diaconal practices). This cooperation is to entail trainings, exchanges/exposures, workshops, publications and WG as task forces on specific issues with the aim to strengthen capacities and skills as well as cooperation, exchange of information and platform of action on these areas. Additionally, activities are to be performed, which will promote intercultural and resource-sharing such as civil society dictionary, case study exchange, regional visits.

Structure

Balkan Network consists of partner organizations, which are equal in their rights and duties as members of the network. Principle of cooperation, partnership, tolerance, dialogue and respect for others are the main working principles in the network. This consists of the Steering Group, Core Group, Working Groups and Secretariat.

The Steering Group is composed of directors or senior representatives of partner organizations and meets on annual meetings (each spring) to discuss the management and strategy of the work.

Principle of rotating Chairperson is applied to each meeting.

The Core Group consists of contact persons from partner organizations and meets on annual meetings (each autumn) to coordinate concrete activities.

Working Groups are thematic mechanisms for cooperation on specific issues and themes. Each partner can initiate, lead and join any Working Group.

The Secretariat, which is currently situated in Macedonian Center for International Cooperation in Skopje, Macedonia, manages the daily functioning and coordination of the network.

MACEDONIAN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (MCIC)

MISSION

The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) is a civic society organization that operates in the domain of sustainable development, awareness raising and social - humanitarian (basic) assistance.

The goal of MCIC is the promotion, support and development of local, national and international initiatives for encouraging sustainable development of human resources in Macedonia and abroad.

For the implementation of its goals and tasks, MCIC mobilizes and organizes human resources, financial and material assets, both in the country and abroad.

MCIC provides funding for the activities from numerous agencies of the World Council of Churches and from governmental and international organizations.

GOALS, SECTORS AND METHODS

The strategic goals of MCIC are:

- promotion of peace;
- further development of civic society;
- help to groups in need.

MCIC is active in the following sectors:

- water supply and sanitation;
- education;
- rural development;
- employment and income generation;
- civic society and democratization;
- emergency aid.
-

MCIC implements its activities through:

- support of projects;
- training and consulting;

- information;
- advocacy and lobbying;
- management

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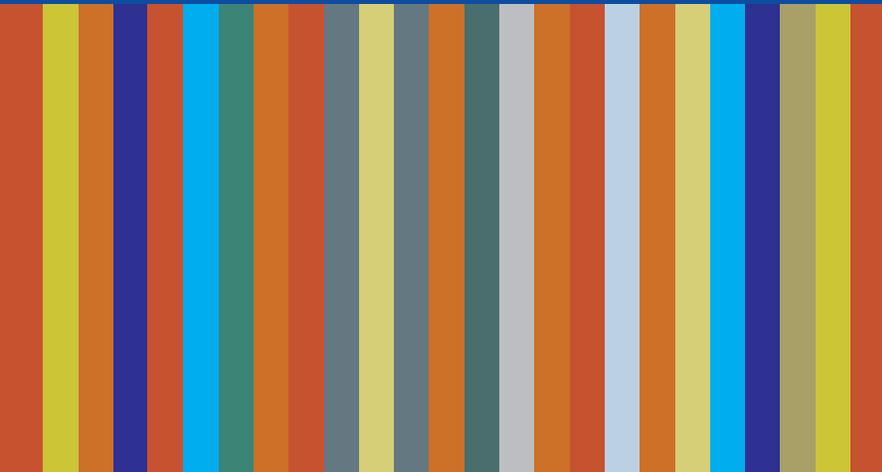
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