Report on regional CSO Networks in the IPA region

Prepared by Heidrun Ferrari and Anja Simić • August 2011

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SUMMARY

TACSO commissioned this report on Regional CSO Networks in the IPA Countries (Western Balkans and Turkey) as an exercise to gain an overview of the existing networks and their collaboration methods, drawing conclusions on their influences and impact on CSO development and sustainability. The objective of the report is to inform TACSO and the EU as well as other interested stakeholders in the added value regional networks have in building sustainable CSOs in the region, what challenges they face and ways to support these networks as to enhance their effectiveness.   Interviews were conducted with a total of six regional networks that agreed to and were available for interviews during the July 2011 research period, followed by interviews with eight CSO member organisations that were proposed by the networks.

Furthermore, in order to provide a general overview of CSO networks in the IPA countries and importance of regional cooperation, their capacities and accountability mechanisms, the report starts from network research, with an introduction of the multiple concepts and definitions of networks, their manifold purposes and structures, preconditions for their effectiveness and the incentives and motives for CSOs to seek membership, up to analyses of the added value regional networks have in ensuring CSO impact and sustainability through three key areas of network engagement: the facilitation of sharing, may it be information or resources, the provision of services and influencing and advocacy.

According to the findings, there are three existing types of regional CSO networks in the IPA countries identified in the report:

1) Networks with shared branding and a centralised regional coordinating body which supports the growth of national member associations.

2) More formalized networks of independent national CSOs as registered entities with a limited number of members CSOs carrying their own brand or name but adhering to network membership criteria and actively taking part in the governance of the network.

3) Larger CSO networks depending on the involvement of individual activists and partner organisations which can consist of over a hundred members, partner organisations and/or individual activists that are loosely connected around a core group of members of the network that typically would not be very much involved in the steering and the governance of the network but who significantly contribute to different areas of interventions.

Based on the testimonies of the interviewees there are a number of common trends, conclusions and recommendations.

For example, despite the existence of these differing types of regional CSO networks, they **typically evolve from externally funded projects** and now act as professional entities recognized by relevant stakeholders. Common to all those regional networks is the existence of *committed civil society organisations that took on leading a project based initiative into a formal structure.*

As they are rooted in initiatives *responding to the post-conflict situation* of the region by aiming to bring different sides together into a wider reconciliation process and *responding to a more complex contemporary situation including the transition process* that the individual countries and

the region as such face, the **regional CSO networks evolve from and seek to respond to regional challenges**

Often when talking about the Western Balkans (WB) or Southeast Europe (SEE), **regional CSO networks apply a broad view of their regional scope** and *do not limit themselves to the various definitions* or to classifications undertaken by donor agencies of what constitutes the WB or SEE.

CSOs in this designated region see **regional CSO networks as the key for the sustainability of civil society organisations and the added value** since networks act *as interlocutors in the provision of information and dissemination of good practice* and lessons learned, the *building of capacities* not only of member organisations but also of the broader civil society and finally, *influencing stakeholders to advance the standing of civil society.* In this regard, regional networks can also play an important role in the strengthening of civil society in Turkey.

The building of social capital and personal communication is essential for the functioning of regional CSO networks. Regional networks in the Western Balkans face challenges similar to networks of similar sizes and scopes in other regions of the world. It is evident that overall regional networks are aware of these challenges and have developed respective approaches or mitigation strategies to balance them. At the core of this is the *acknowledgement that the social capital of a network is the most important asset that can only be built over time through gaining mutual trust on the basis of personal communication and collaboration.*

In order to foster member ownership of the network but also to avoid an overburdening of capacities of the coordinating entity, **regional CSO networks aim to apply the principle of subsidiarity in their work with member organisations** and aim to only step in when there is a distinct

regional component to an issue or a member organisation requires its support.

Furthermore, should they wish *to avoid an over-personalization of communication and collaboration*, **regional CSO networks emphasize the importance of governance structures**, not only to external stakeholders but internally to its members.

Although most of the regional CSO networks have developed **multi-annual strategic plans** based on their overall visions and objectives, these are **not accompanied by monitoring frameworks with clearly developed indicators or by matching longer-term fundraising/funding strategies.**

Inclusiveness of regional CSO networks is ensured through multiple forms of CSO engagement, such as a consultative status, supporter status or a partnership. It is noteworthy that *organisations affiliated to these regional networks other than through membership receive similar benefits.* Therefore, regional networks in the IPA countries are far from developing into exclusive interest groups that pursue the interests of only their members.

From the members' viewpoint, civil society organisations are clear about the costs and benefits of engaging with regional CSO networks. Generally civil society organisations are *aware of membership advantages* and *encouraged by the sharing of values* of what they consider will contribute to the democratisation of their respective societies. Moreover, civil society organisations are also *conscious of the costs of such membership*, not only in a monetary sense. Also the *capacity to absorb networking outcomes* within their organisations turns out to be a key for continuous member organisation engagement.

The report concludes by making specific recommendations to relevant stakeholders.

TACSO may support the strengthening of regional CSO networks by providing them with the opportunity to engage with relevant regional stakeholders. In addition, further exploration and evaluation of national CSO networks may contribute to a better understanding of the overall networking trends and deepen the space for optimising collaboration methods, as regional networks do not work in isolation.

TACSO and regional networks should establish *coordination mechanisms among regional networks*, for instance an annual conference or joint training learning exchange. As regional networks face similar challenges it would be extremely important to promote the exchange of good practice and lessons learned. Also, eefforts should be made to *transfer existing knowledge* and lessons learned from regional networks based in the Western Balkans *to support the establishment and strengthening of similar initiatives in Turkey*. Lastly, regional networks may be supported by developing their capacities further through *more specialized training on network management tailor-made on the basis of a capacity needs assessment*.

Regional networks should explore the possibility of a *more structured exchange* of service delivery among networks as there are for example specialised networks offering focused services or trainings; develop *more comprehensive mid-and long-term fundraising strategies* beyond the project level jointly with member organisations to avoid competition for funding sources, as well as a *comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system* with indicators measuring progress against objectives. This is essential not only because donor agencies request monitoring of outcomes

rather than outputs but also for reasons of motivating member and partner organisations.

The European Union should ensure that *sufficient funding is available*, e.g. through the IPA Civil Society Facility to support the roles of the regional network secretariats or management entity and that strengthens coordination. Funding per assessed need would typically have to include e.g. staff and running costs, travel costs for annual meetings and/or other collaboration mechanisms, minimum funding for research, publications and so forth. It would be also important for the EU to make sure to *utilize the vast expertise of civil society organisations concentrated in the regional networks into all stages of the IPA programming cycle*, in particular into the Programming Committee of the IPA Civil Society Facility as regional networks have knowledge and practical know-how in the areas covered by the five components of the IPA financial instruments.

Finally, national governments should support the role of the regional CSO networks by *making funding available and use their expertise* in policy processes and the formulation of national action plans and strategies.

Introduction

The Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) project is funded by the European Commission as part of the IPA Civil Society Facility (CSF) and implemented by SIPU International in consortium with organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Romania, and Turkey.

An important activity of TACSO is the facilitation of the cooperation between the CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey. Therefore TACSO commissioned this report on CSO Networks in the IPA Countries (Western Balkans and Turkey) as an exercise to gain an overview of existing networks and their collaboration methods, drawing conclusions on their influences and impact on CSO development and sustainability. The objective of the report is to inform TACSO and the EU as well as other interested stakeholders on the added value regional networks have in building sustainable CSOs in the region, what challenges they face and ways to support these networks as to enhance their effectiveness.

The methodology applied to produce this report included the initial provision of information by TACSO resident advisors and desk research for a first mapping of regional CSO networks. This was followed by Skype interviews with regional networks and member organisations. The interviews were based on two structured questionnaires specifically designed for the networks and for member organisations to allow aggregation and analysis.

The objective of the interviews was to assess the networks and its members. Networks were assessed by looking into their capacity and accountability as well as its impact, i.e. the added value the network has for its members.

In doing so, organisational effectiveness such as leadership, management, resources, external relationship management, accountability including both, members' and external accountabilities, facilitation of 'sharing', provision of services, and channels of influence were examined.

When talking about members, the assessment was focused on why members decide to join the networks, when it is relevant, what is appropriate timing and format of membership, what are the capacities of CSOs, what kind of organisational structures exist? Here also the facilitation of 'sharing', provision of services, and channels of influence were examined but from the CSOs' perception.

The list of regional CSO networks that was compiled as part of this report aims to serve as a starting point for further identification and mapping of networks active in the region. This first mapping exercise applied rather broad criteria in order to avoid 'missing out' on relevant networks or initiatives. Hence, criteria included that the network should be based in one of the countries eligible for IPA funding, member presence in at least two countries (but not exclusively in the IPA countries) with a broad understanding of what civil society organisations these networks encompass, therefore potentially including not only non-governmental organisations, but also academia and media associations or chambers of commerce.

Following discussions between TACSO and the authors, it was decided to have a random selection of possible interviewees to ensure that the selection would reflect a broad representation and variety in terms of scope and area of engagement. Finally, interviews were conducted with a total six regional networks that agreed to and were available for interviews during the July 2011research period, followed by interviews with eight CSO member organisations that were proposed by the networks.

Regional CSO networks that participated in the making of this report include:

- Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)
- Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)
- Igman Initiative
- Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC)
- Oneworld Platform for Southeast Europe (Oneworld SEE Network)
- South East European (SEE) Heritage Network

Member CSOs that were interviewed include:

- Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99
- Cenzura Plus, Croatia
- Civic Initiatives, Serbia
- Forum for Freedom in Education Croatia
- Igman Initiative for Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Promente, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Syri I Vizionit, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99
- TUSEV, Turkey

One of the limitations – and at the same time a finding – of this report is that it was not possible to identify a regional CSO network based in Turkey that includes members from the other IPA countries. Here, the interview with Turkish CSO TUSEV, a member of the BCSDN provided important insight into the background and challenges of Turkish networks, which has fed into this report.

The report is comprised of five chapters followed by conclusions and recommendations. Chapter one draws from network research and aims to provide a general understanding of the multiple concepts and definitions of networks, their manifold purposes and structures, preconditions for their

effectiveness and the incentives for CSOs to seek membership. Chapter two concentrates on a general overview of CSO networks in the IPA countries and the importance of regional cooperation. Chapter three considers the capacities of regional networks and accountability mechanisms. Incentives and motives of CSOs to join regional networks are examined in chapter four. Chapter five analyses the added value regional networks have to ensure CSO impact and sustainability through three key areas of network engagement, the facilitation of sharing, may it be information or resources, the provision of services and influencing and advocacy.

Chapter 1: Understanding CSO networks

Networks are increasingly viewed by stakeholders such as international agencies and CSOs as an effective organisational model and the building of networks has become an important approach to strengthen civil society as well as to address problems at the national and regional levels in a more complex world. Hence, the importance of networks has grown during the last decade and the engagement of civil society organisations in the national and regional networks is more and more seen as a core part of their activities. This has also been supported by the speedy development of communication technologies that enhance the possibilities for sharing and collaboration, which is unrestricted by geography.

Perkin and Court (2005) have identified a number of key factors that contribute to the increased importance of networks, including 'globalisation' and the increased complexity of global power systems, 'governance' and the growing pressure on governments and international organisations to ensure legitimacy and effectiveness, 'social capital' as personal relations influence formal structures and processes, 'organisational management' as networks can provide a practical tool for organisational and knowledge management and finally 'ICT development', which enhances the scope of networks. Also Church et al (2002) highlight that IT development enables networks to mobilize resources on a global scale.

1.1 Concepts and definitions

Yet, it is difficult to define what networks really constitute and how they differ from, for example coalitions. Various authors have formulated a variety of definitions. For Singh and Stevens (2007) *'a network has an*

institutional framework, is structured or loose with some set of parameters, has well defined and specific tasks and responsibilities and has defined boundaries. There are both internal and external functions of a network.' In this regard the authors highlight the distinction to coalitions and alliances which in contrary to networks are very issue based, time bound and campaign driven, a less formalized 'temporary combination of parties'.

Perkin and Court (2005) define networks as *'structures that link individuals or organisations who share a common interest on a specific issue or a general set of values.'* For Prasad and Prasad (2005) *'a network is any group of individuals and organizations who on a voluntary basis, exchange information or goods or implement joint activities and who organize themselves for that purpose in such a way that individual autonomy remains intact.'*

Liebler and Ferri (2004) have recognized some general characteristics on which they claim that there is consensus about in current research. In this respect networks are (a) created for a variety of purposes and embody a variety of structures, (b) can be informal or formal associations, whereas the latter comprises management and communication structures as well as clear membership criteria, and (c) need to constitute more than only acting as a resource centre for members. They identify a set of categories of networks which include communities of practice, knowledge networks, sectoral networks, social change or advocacy networks and service delivery networks. Church et al (2002) find the basis of networks in the relationship it establishes and fosters as a process that gives the networks its strength and a common purpose that distinguishes a network from simple networking.

1.2 General purposes of networks

Networks are initiated for a variety of purposes. For Perkin and Court (2005) networks are particularly geared to perform three basic key functions. First, 'communication' across horizontal and vertical dimensions, second 'creativity' in relation to free and interactive communication amongst diverse actors and third 'consensus' as like-minded actors rally around a common issue. For Mendizabal (2006) networks have the following key functions: They 'filter', meaning they 'decide' or select relevant information for their members. They 'amplify' ideas and make them widely understood. They 'convene' as they bring together people or groups of people. They 'invest/provide' as they offer means to their members so that they are able to carry out their activities. They 'build communities' by promoting and sustaining values and standards and they 'facilitate' to help members carry out their activities more effectively.

Similarly, Singh and Stevens (2007) have also identified five basic purposes of networks which include (1) 'communication' across parties for educating, sensitizing and motivating including the facilitation of exchange of ideas and experiences, (2) emotional and material 'solidarity', (3) 'influencing others' including the public, political parties, the media and the corporate sector, (4) 'mobilizing energy and resources' on particular issues and (5) the promotion of 'linkage building' by bringing together like-minded individuals, groups and institutions around a shared agenda. Singh and Stevens then move on and identify the roles and purpose of more formalized networks with respective managerial entities such as a secretariat. These basically focus on three specific areas, which include (a) facilitation of 'sharing' of information or resources; (b) 'servicing' the network members may it be capacity building or other forms of technical support and (c) 'influencing' policy makers including state governments and donor agencies.

1.3 Structures, preconditions and challenges

Singh and Stevens (2007) have defined three parameters around which network types can be identified and which shape the *structures* of these networks. The first parameter is the degree of formalisation. Whereas some networks are very informal, others have clear membership criteria and procedures as well as defined roles and responsibilities for members and the governing and management bodies of the network. Here, Sigh and Stevens note that an initially informal network becomes more formalized over time. The second parameter is the degree of coordination inside and outside the network and the third parameter is the degree of commonality of thoughts of network members. Sigh and Steven formulate the thesis that the more diverse a network is and the more diverse member organisations' expectations towards the network are, the higher the degree of formalisation is, as networks become more formalised in search of greater commonality.

Although networks very much differ in their *structures and roles* ranging from informal arrangements to formalised organisations there are certain preconditions that seem to be essential for effective and sustainable networks. Ashman (2004) identified the following conditions: (1) 'pre-existing social capital' including common norms that facilitate cooperation, (2) 'strategic fit' referring to goals and methodology, an added value and complementary functional roles, (3) 'donor relationship' to access resources and other forms of support, (4) 'leadership commitment' including support from senior leadership, (5) 'governance and management' that coordinates rather than directs and that has effective communication systems in place, (6) 'mutual trust' and (7) 'joint learning'.

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Perkin and Court (2005) recognized a number of *factors and preconditions* that determine the success of policy influencing networks. These include: clear governance agreements; strength in numbers, meaning the larger the numbers of member organisations involved the greater the political weight; representativeness as a key source of legitimacy and influence; quality of evidence for credible and effective communication; the existence of key individuals who can facilitate policy influence; the existence of informal links which would be critical in achieving objectives; a complementation of official structures rather than duplication and the application of ICT.

There are a number of *challenges and pitfalls* that jeopardize the effectiveness of networks. Singh and Stevens (2007) have mapped out inherent ambivalences of networks. These consist of (a) 'participation versus responsibility' as network members participate or better said profit from the network but hesitate to take on the responsibility to feed back to the network, (b) 'coordination versus control' as a fine balance for the networks management entity to keep, (c) the 'linkage between the individual and the institution' referring to the challenge of how the designated individual can involve its member organisation into the activities of the network, (d) 'information versus action' as information shared is not always relevant for respective action or do not lead to respective actions, (e) 'focus versus inclusion' refers to the dilemma that more broad-based networks might be more inclusive but struggle with varied interests and hence lose their focus and finally (f) 'process versus structure' as structure should be there to facilitate the networking process to achieve the networks' goals rather than hindering it.

Also Holmén (2002) has identified a number of *challenges* networks face and points out that the issue of representation tends to be problematic but is generally overlooked, in particular when networks take on a

representation function towards external stakeholders. Moreover networks face the challenge of being of relevance to their members which predetermine their motivation to engage with a network. Holmén also notes that the challenges networks face are mostly of practical nature such as the availability of sufficient human resources. Trans-national advocacy networks especially struggle often if there are no transparent and formal mechanisms to foster cooperation and interaction as well as a lack of horizontal engagement of its members.

1.4 Incentives and preconditions to engage with networks

Finally, there is the question of why a civil society organisation engages with a particular network. Liebler and Ferri (2004) have highlighted the importance for organisations to undertake a cost-benefit analysis before joining a network to avoid associated risks including the creation of interdependencies, the creation of additional work loads, the loss of organisational identity and insufficient representation or misrepresentation. Rosendal Østergaard and Nielsen (2005) also flag the issue of costs versus opportunities of engaging in a network and have identified critical determinants for organisations to network. Primary conditions refer to 'contents, timing and format': Activities of a network must be perceived of relevance for the organisation and of direct usability (timing). In addition, the actual form has to meet the needs of the organisation. The secondary condition refers to 'organisational capacity' meaning that the members need to be able to make use of the outcome. Here, it is particularly highlighted that networking at the managerial level could turn out to be more effective as the organisational 'bird's-eye view' by the management would emphasize an institutionalization of networking outcomes. The tertiary condition refers to 'organisational culture' including a culture of participation in networks as well as in organisations. In this context, organisational culture of the latter

determines whether an organisations looks beyond their own structure for input.

Liebler and Ferri (2004) have recognized a number of benefits for members that a network can potentially offer. These include (1) increased access to resources including information and expertise, (2) increased efficiency through reduced costs, avoidance of duplication of efforts and sharing of lessons learned, (3) a multiplier effect as the value of the network is greater than the sum of its partners, (4) solidarity and support, (5) increased visibility of issues, best practices and contribution of underrepresented groups, (6) risk mitigation in project implementation, (7) reduced isolation in particular of organisations and individuals in remote locations and (8) increased credibility to both the policy and donor communities.

Chapter 2: Regional civil society networks in the IPA countries

2.1 Regional cooperation

The Regional policy of the EU is an important element within the transformation process of the IPA countries and an essential part of the EU enlargement strategy. It aims to improve the socio-economic well being of regions in the EU and to avoid regional disparities. Convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and European territorial cooperation constitute the three objectives of the current 2007 – 2013 funding period. Enhanced regional cooperation is one of the major objectives set down in the Thessaloniki agenda, endorsed in the EU–Western Balkans Summit of June 2003, in order to strengthen the stabilisation and association process. The Western Balkan countries committed themselves to continue to develop regional cooperation and to promote a series of specific objectives with regard to regional free trade, the creation of regional markets, cross-border and parliamentary cooperation, and a number of other areas.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is the EU's financial instrument for the pre-accession process. Countries benefitting from the financial Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) include the Western Balkans and Turkey.[1] These are the countries that in relation to the EU have either already closed the negotiation process, have candidate or potential candidate status to become full-EU members in the future. In this context, the region undertakes extensive reforms in terms of adoption

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[1] Here, the Western Balkans is a political term regularly used to group countries located at the Balkan Peninsula, geographically part of south eastern Europe, that are not yet full-members of the European Union: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99 (hereinafter as Kosovo), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (hereinafter as Macedonia), Montenegro and Serbia. Financial assistance through the IPA is also provided to Iceland with whom the European Council has started negotiations on EU accession in June 2010. However, the report will only consider countries of the Western Balkan and Turkey.

of the EU Acquis, development and reforms of administration structures, including mobilisation of resources across sectors to reach democratisation standards and benchmarks defined to meet EU accession conditions. It also aims to prepare countries for the receipt and use of Structural Funds. From here, each country separately, undergoes specific socio-economic reforms set within the transition process that reflects the pre- and post-conflict period from 90' onwards. Turkey is a candidate country for EU membership since December 1999. Accession negotiations started in October 2005 with the examination of the EU legislation (the so-called screening process). The country went on to introduce substantial human rights and cross-sectors reforms.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC, former SEE Stability Pact) is a good example of such a strategic policy being translated into specific objectives and activities where the RCC, as an intergovernmental initiative, is regionally owned and mandated to represent the region, assist the SEE Cooperation Process, monitor regional activities, exert leadership in regional cooperation, provide a regional perspective in donor assistance – notably the EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) – and support increased involvement of civil society in regional activities. The RCC operates under the political guidance of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) where Western Balkan countries and Turkey have full membership and play an active role in these processes.[2]

The SEECP is a forum for diplomatic and political dialogue reaffirming the political will and readiness of the countries from SEE to work together and to follow a common agenda thus meeting the region's needs of stability, security, democratization and economic prosperity. The basic goals of regional co-operation within SEECP include the strengthening of security and the political situation, intensification of economic relations and co-

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[2] See also Regional Cooperation Council.

operation in the areas of human resources, democracy, justice, and battle against illegal activities. It is the intention of the SEECP to enable its members to approach the European and Euro-Atlantic structures through the strengthening of good neighbourly relations and transformation of the region into an area of peace and stability.

In the progress of the South-East European Cooperation Process the principle of 'regional ownership' has been playing a major role. According to this principle, the participating countries have to initiate regional co-operation projects based on specific needs and priority areas in the region. Coordination of the joint activities of the SEE countries is carried out by the Regional Cooperation Council and the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in SEE. The SEECP regularly underlines the importance of the role of civil society organisations and the latest report of the current Montenegrin Chairmanship lists among its activities the SEECP discussions on modalities of concrete contribution of civil society to the SEE countries on their European path.

At the most recent conference, organised by RCC in Brussels in March 2011, on the Europe 2020 Strategy reinforced that its success depends on the involvement of all sections of society (including the private sector, trade unions, civil society organisations, local authorities and individual citizens). A clear conclusion came forward on the importance of involving regional civil society networks and initiatives as partners in the facilitation of civic dialogue, information sharing and an overall strengthening of regional cooperation across all sectors.

The European Union reiterated many times its strong commitment to the European perspective of the region, where democracy, the rule of law, and human rights must remain at the heart of the accession process, supported by civil society. The involvement of civil society organisations is viewed as

a prerequisite to ensure quality service delivery and public representation and support where civil society significantly contributes towards social integration, awareness building, development of a culture of political dialogue and tolerance, and establishment of productive relationships between governmental, business and non-governmental sectors. In this converging process, the civil society representatives including NGOs, media, academia and individual citizens from the Western Balkan countries came forward to form numerous regional and cross-border initiatives that cut across sectors and advocate on issues jointly identified as challenges in the process of democratization of their societies.

2.2 Existing regional civil society networks

With the move forward to regional cooperation it is important that civil society is given a voice to ensure ownership in the fostering regional relations in the IPA countries and here regional civil society networks play a key role. Presently, there are over 30 regional civil society networks and initiatives working in the Western Balkans. In contrast, there are few regional initiatives that have evolved from Turkey, especially with an affiliation to the Western Balkans, due to a number of reasons including a lack of enabling legislation in the past. However, as the civil society sector is thriving, many organisations aim to open up and to establish a culture of collaboration among CSOs within Turkey but also with the civil society sector in the broader region.

Regional initiatives in the Western Balkans evolve in various forms. Some of them are formally registered entities; others are acting as platforms or are established as ad-hoc initiatives to support a specific cause. Several of these networks are very broad in approaching regional cooperation, others focus on various issues. A number of networks were created from the grassroot initiatives, some formalized within the exit/localization

process of internationally funded projects/organisations, others joined forces to answer specific problems and some networks established strong cooperation mechanisms to enable joint fundraising. For the purposes of this research, although there are no clear cuts and definitions, the scope of the existing regional networks can be grouped around the following themes:

Regional Dialogue

Cross-border cooperation is an obvious element of all the networks; however, some are specifically established to intensively promote regional dialogue that cuts across all sectors. Hence, networks have no single issue at focus but address a spectrum of topics that are all used as a vehicle to promote genuine dialogue to strengthen regional stability. Mobilization of citizens to become active participants in the transition process and the strengthening of democracy is at the heart of these networks. Their strategies aim to secure long-term regional stability, while activities target a wide audience of citizens aspired to be members of pluralistic societies. Here, topics range from reconciliation and democracy promotion, youth and cultural cooperation, up to specific issues on environment, energy security or sports.

These networks are more focused on opening vertical and horizontal communication channels, the establishment of professional and personal connections and the encouragement of youth to learn about democratic values, leaning more towards effective flexible cooperation mechanisms, rather than rigid and over-centralized managerial structures. The origins of these networks may be found in the constructive aspects of the regional collective memory in what may be identified as a good practice in support of collaboration mechanisms.

Igman Initiative

The Igman Initiative was established in 2000 and is comprised of more than 140 non-governmental organisations from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, working towards renewing the cooperation and normalizing inter-state relations within the Dayton Triangle. The Igman Initiative implements macro -, micro - , and youth projects across the region, also organises conferences and public debates. Igman Initiative

Human Rights

Following the 1990's conflicts in the region, human rights took an important space on the agendas of civil society organisations in the Western Balkans. From the early conflict and post-conflict period, civil society organisations advocated intensively on the local, national and regional level promoting tolerance along ethnic lines, addressing displacement and other concrete issues and advocating for basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status. In addition, in some of the IPA countries the transition process has led to aggravated economic and social rights that prompted many civil society organisations to form coalitions to support the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, this took place mainly at the national level.

Today there is a strong presence of networks that advocate on minority, women and children rights as well as working on specific issues such as anti-trafficking of persons or migration related issues. Many of these networks are initiated and supported via internationally funded projects or conferences. Even ten years since the end of the armed conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia the questions related to the war crimes, missing persons and war prisoners are high on the agenda of the regional networks. These initiatives are rooted in the need for justice and

recognition that the way forward to a truly democratic society lays with the genuine close of the war chapter.

RECOM

The Coalition for RECOM is a non-political regional gathering of CSOs that represent and promote the Initiative for RECOM towards the establishment of a Regional Commission tasked with the establishment of the facts about victims of war crimes and other human rights violations committed on the territory of the Former Yugoslavia during 1991 to 2001. Around 1,900 NGOs, associations of victims' families, youth organisations and renowned individuals gathered around this initiative. From 2006 to 2011 the Coalition for RECOM involved 8,700 advocates of the Regional Commission.

RECOM

Democratization and engagement with the European Union

Along with the regions' EU accession process, a number of civil society organisations from the Western Balkans have joined to form regional networks dedicated to the promotion of democratic integration of countries in the region into the European Union, promotion of European values, and encouragement of mutual cooperation and advocacy to support accession processes.

These networks work along two main lines. One is advocacy related to the EU enlargement strategy, where they also promote EU values and mobilize citizens to participate in various aspects of EU life or promote their representation within European institutions. The other is the provision of various capacity building services, where networks provide important instruments to the CSO community in relation to the EU policies, funds or promotes activities enabling the civil society environment as a whole.

Here, existing regional networks are formal, with functioning administrative and managerial structures, implementing various projects, such as development of policies for CSOs, conducting research and assessments, provision of trainings, organisation of advocacy events and conferences. This is also one of the very few fields where Turkey has network representatives along with Western Balkans countries.

Balkan Civil Society Development Network - BCSDN
The BCSDN is a network of 15 civil society organisations from ten countries in Southeastt Europe. The BCSDN objectives are to increase the role of civil society by strengthening its voice in policy- and decision-making on the national, regional and EU level; promoting civil dialogue between civil society actors, state institutions and the European Union in order to influence public choices; and developing civil society by increasing knowledge and skills of civil society actors as a base for higher quality of their work. The BCSDN regularly conducts research and brings up-to-date information and advice policies relevant to CSO development.
BCSDN

Media
Media networking in the Western Balkans has had many forms; tracing its initial establishment to a need to promote the sharing of information across national borders, acting up against disinformation tactics of state-run media and providing marginalized journalists with access to an international audience. Some media networks also played an important role in connecting people and families separated by the conflicts.

Regionally formed media networks today have transformed to modern media houses where investigative journalism tops their agendas, treating up-to-date topics relevant to political and democratic life of the region. These are the initiatives that have recognized the benefits of cross-border information sharing, the limitations of working in isolation and the strength that derives from a shared vision and the professionalization of journalism. In this regard news and information are not the only exchange commodities, but also capacity building of journalists and the facilitation of dialogue.

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network – BIRN

The BIRN is a close group of editors and trainers that enables journalists in the region to produce in-depth analytical and investigative journalism on complex political, economic and social themes. BIRN has members in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, and the BIRN Hub. In Bosnia, this means training on war crimes reporting; in Serbia, on minority journalism; and in Kosovo, producing televised debates on current affairs. In Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania the emphasis is on reporting on the process of European Union integration and membership challenges.

BIRN

Youth

There are a number of very active regional youth networks, with clear objectives to develop communication that feed mutual understanding among young people in support of the promotion of democratic values. These are the initiatives that strongly promote grassroot representation and exchange of experience and information across borders. The aim of these networks is to enhance youth participation in the democratization of

the society through the process of establishing new, progressive regional connections.

Typically, these networks are well-organised and implement a variety of projects, from campaigns and educational activities to initiatives addressing issues that matter to youth and volunteer and exchange programmes.

South East Europe Youth Network - SEEYN

The SEEYN is a network organisation involving 15 member NGOs from eight countries in an attempt to overcome differences among societies that have a recent tradition of conflicts through gathering young people from the entire South East Europe region to work together on global issues. SEEYN aims to promote pro-social values, youth employability, peace and understanding through the development of volunteering grassroots and exchange programmes, supporting youth initiatives, advocacy and capacity building.

SEEYN

Women's Initiatives

A number of existing regional initiatives have been formed by women's organisations and dominantly in the field of peace-building and promotion of tolerance. These networks are less formal while non-violence, promotion of regional dialogue and activities strengthening participation of women in decision making in the field of security and peace-building are their main elements.

Women's organisations are also regionally active in the field of minority rights and promotion of education and women's position in the society.

These initiatives are mainly supported via international regional projects or organisations with the objective to advocate for minority rights and increase capacities of local women's organisations. To a certain extent, this focus constitutes a departure from the tendency of women's organisations in, for example Western Europe, to focus primarily on issues relating exclusively to women's position in society.

> *Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice - RWL*
> Founded in 2006, the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe brings together women politicians and activists from the region that are committed to the goals of deepening human security, promoting women's rights and participation in decision-making processes and breaking barriers of ethno-centric politics. There are 27 members across seven countries working together to strengthen the position of women in democratization and the post-conflict recovery process by advancing justice and reconciliation.
> [RWL](RWL)

Culture

The idea of creating a network for the joint promotion, preservation and sustainable usage of cultural heritage emerged as a number of civil society organisations active in this field recognized a need for a joint action to preserve a regional cultural heritage, but also to protect its misuse for political purposes. These initiatives build on cooperation, a mutual understanding and respect on the basis of their cultural differences and believe that cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is a valuable resource. Various projects support these objectives, such as issuance of publications, organisation of conferences and public debates as well as the provision of expert support in preserving cultural heritage.

South East Europe Heritage Network – SEE Heritage

SEE Heritage is a network of non-governmental organisations from South East Europe, established in 2006. The mission of the SEE Heritage network is to work towards protecting and promoting the common cultural heritage with the aim of encouraging sustainable development of the region. The SEE Heritage meets regularly and produces various booklets and publications offering professional opinions and policy advice.

SEE Heritage

Environment

There are a significant number of regional initiatives that advocate for environmental standards, clean technologies, 'green jobs', the adoption and application of environmental laws and legislation, or specific issues such as e-waste management. This can be seen as a remarkable development given that in comparison to, for example EU Member States, environmental protection and conservation is not a very high priority for most IPA countries.

Most of these networks developed out of internationally funded environmental projects from where the participating organisations have decided to form regional networks as a mechanism to follow-up. Today, these networks have formal structures and act as registered associations or foundations. Generally, environmental networks are highly visible and act as members of various international bodies advocating for a green agenda in their region.

Balkan Environmental Life Leadership Standard - BELLS

The BELLS movement advocates that Western Balkan countries, as future members of the EU community, implement sustainable development standards. Through various initiatives, actions and education BELLS

enable citizens of the Western Balkans to fulfill their right to a healthy environment and better economic and social standards. Only through dialogue, partnership, understanding and harmonization with EU legislature can people achieve positive changes on the national and regional level.

BELLS

Education

A limited number of regional initiatives exist in the field of education; however there is a strong presence of a larger network that is based in the region, and whose specific goal is working on growth in the area of educational policy and related topics. This formal and well structured network of educational institutions and civil society organisations works on specific issues related to the development of educational policies across sectors but also provides services and capacity.

Network of Education Policy Centres - NEPC

The NEPC with its 23 institutional members and five individual members in 20 countries has three years of successful common project work and professional growth in the area of educational policy and related topics. The mission of the NEPC is promoting flexible, participatory, evidence-based, transparent education policies embedding open society values. By promoting these values, the NEPC understands proactive policy initiatives as well as advocacy and monitoring activities that will ensure that governments and national education systems deliver on their commitments.

NEPC

Business

Although only informal, there are a few regional initiatives in the field of improving the business environment. These are the initiatives that gather civil society organisations and the private sector interested in corporate social responsibility and those interested in issues related to improvement of the business climate for women entrepreneurs.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Network

The regional conference "Development of Corporate Social Responsibility – Examples of Good Practice" was organised by Centre for Development of NGOS (CRNVO), a BCSDN member, in 2009, during which an initiative for a regional network on CSR was launched. The aim of the conference was to bring together representatives from the civil society, business sector and government to discuss the current state of and practices in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the region and identify ways for regional cooperation.

[Local CSOs Initiate Regional Network on Social Responsibility](#)

Chapter 3: Network capacities and accountability

3.1 Network formation

Most of the regional networks that participated in the survey *emerged from externally funded projects*. For example the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) formed out of the WCC South-East Europe Ecumenical Partnership; the SEE Heritage Network from an initiative funded by the Cultural Heritage without Borders; and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) emerged through the localisation of the Balkan programme of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Founding members of these networks are typically civil society organisations that participated in the preceding projects and that continue to operate as self-regulating organisations under their own names. Here, only the BIRN represents a different path whereby a centralised regional hub was established at first which then supported the growth of national member associations that share a common, standardized brand.

The *decision to move to a formally established and registered network* usually followed several years of informal and project/event related collaboration (between two to eight years in the case of the networks interviewed for this survey), and was undertaken by a core group of around six to twelve organisations from the various countries. Regional CSO networks registered mostly as a foundation to obtain a legal organisational form. For the BSCDN the registration as a foundation was viewed as the only way forward, given that founding entities were CS organisations as juristic persons and not the individual CSO representatives as natural persons. This was important for BCSDN in order to avoid tying the network to individual CSO representatives who can change over time. From this, BCSDN draws the conclusion that a change in

the laws on association and foundations and the possibility for founding an association by foreign legal entities (i.e. CSOs from several countries) would provide invaluable support for the establishment and functioning of regional CSO networks. Finally, the Igman Initiative represents the exception of a larger but informal network. The Initiative, from its beginnings, was very much based on personal connections and commitment and opted for an informal mode of operation again for reasons of flexibility.

3.2 Management and coordination

The organisational make-up of formally organised regional networks is subject to the law on associations applicable in the country of registration, which provides respective stipulations including on executive and governance structures and financial management. Hence, formally registered networks have established secretariats or executive offices as coordinating and managing entities. An exception of this model is the Igman Initiative which is coordinated by the four co-presidents who are also representing four lead CSOs including the Civic Committee for Human Rights in Croatia, the Green Building Council in Montenegro, the Centre for Regionalism in Serbia and the Tuzla Forum in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The *size of the coordinating entity of a regional network can vary* to a great extent. For example the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) regional hub, based in Sarajevo, consists of a total of nine staff including the regional director, finance manager, country and programme coordinators and editors. Also the coordinating entity of the Oneworld Platform for Southeast Europe (Oneworld SEE) consists of a total of nine staff including one person responsible for the overall management and legal representation as director, a finance person and others on a project

base. The secretariats of the SEE Heritage Network and the BCSDN employ a total of two staff, including the directors.

Particularly for network secretariats of a smaller size it seems not to be unusual that these are *hosted by one of its founding member organisations*. For example the SEE Heritage Network based in Kotor, Montenegro, shares premises with the Center for Sustainable Spatial Development (Expeditio). The BCSDN is hosted by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation in Skopje. For these networks this support proves to be essential to bridge a transition phase until the executive body can function fully by itself. Often this goes hand in hand with other forms of support, including financial and management support and shared human resources. Here, the decision of which member would host the network follows primarily practical necessities and member capacities, although, for example in its statutes the BCSDN has laid down modalities for the selection of the hosting organisation.

The coordinating and managing entities of a network, whether called secretariat, executive office or managing team, have a multitude of functions. These typically include the day-to-day management and coordination of the network activities including financial and project management, assistance in the functioning of the governing bodies of the network, facilitation of strategizing and programming, acting as the focal point for members and taking on the responsibility for membership development.

Some of the networks interviewed, stated that at times there is a feeling that the *workload overburdens the number of secretariat staff available* to carry out tasks and would ideally require additional human resources. In particular, the facilitation of network member input proves to generate unforeseen work and is very time-consuming as a lot of members consist

of smaller organisations which depend on, to a large extent, volunteers who work in their free time. For the Oneworld SEE Network the concept of the 'virtual office', with half of their staff based in various countries and communication and coordination is mainly done through the application of ITCs, requires an extra amount of organisational discipline for example by introducing fixed available online hours. Often networks employ part-time staff and/or volunteers not only as a means of flexibility but also as a coping strategy in response to a competing private sector that offers higher salaries.

3.3. Mechanisms of accountability

All regional networks have clearly defined their *missions, visions and strategies* which are documented and publically available. Strategies are regularly revisited and if necessary revised with input from the member organisations via assemblies or council meetings and fine-tuned by the managing entities at times with support from specific working groups. Secretariats often also provide an impetus for new strategic directions. For example, the change process of the BCSDN to move from capacity building towards policy work geared towards the EU was very much promoted by the secretariat.

Formally registered networks are legally obliged to develop statutes which lay down the functions of the executive and governing bodies. In addition *most networks have developed more detailed codes of conducts, rules and procedures* including financial and accounting procedures. The importance of having clear rules and regulations has been highlighted repeatedly by a number of network representatives interviewed as a means to avoid personalization and strengthen the institutional memory of the organisation and also in the light of managing conflictual situations or disagreement.

Like any organisations that operate as legal entities, formally registered networks have governing bodies. These include first a *board* that approves strategies and takes operational decisions including on annual work programmes and financial plans, appointing and overseeing the work of the secretariat and deciding on membership status. A board usually consists of member organisation representatives who get appointed for a duration of two to four years and meet around once or twice per year. Interestingly, two regional networks have innovated approaches by including external representatives into their boards. The BCSDN has elected a representative of a non-member organisation as they saw it as important to enhance the diversity of the board, both in terms of expertise and geographic scope. In addition, the BCSDN currently assesses the feasibility of establishing an advisory board consisting of experts and donor agency representatives to enhance visibility and attract long-term funding. Also, the BIRN is currently in the process of adding independent professionals such as journalists to the composition of their board in order to enhance more diversity and improve the quality of services. All in all, network secretariats acknowledge that they are able to act independently from the board at the operational level. Nevertheless, despite the challenge of working with board members in different geographic locations, secretariats view cooperation with the boards as productive and value to the advisory support.

The second governing pillar besides a board is a *council or assembly* which would typically be responsible for the adoption of policies and strategies as well as relevant reports and to elect the members of the board. Here, representation models that regional networks apply vary, either authorizing a representative of a member organisation or a representative for all members of a given country.

In addition, sound *monitoring and evaluation systems* provide a means for internal and external accountability. However, monitoring and evaluation is generally not well developed. Regional networks monitor at the project level and in case of external donor funding in line with respective requirements.

Although some networks have undergone larger programme or organisational evaluations, for instance the BSCDN underwent two larger external evaluations in 2003 and 2007; comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems that establish progress on longer-term organisational and strategic goals against concrete indicators are missing. The Oneworld SEE Network has recently introduced Outcome Mapping, a qualitative M&E methodology particularly useful for campaigning and policy influencing organisations, as a basis for the development of its 2011 – 2013 strategic plan and is in the process of introducing respective monitoring tools such as the performance, strategy and outcome journals.[3]

3.4 Membership development

The *regional scope of networks* is not limited to the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania but also includes members from the new EU member states, in particular Romania and Bulgaria. Although some of the regional networks have established contacts with Turkish civil society organisations only the BCSDN and the NEPC Network have members from Turkey. Here at times networks seem to struggle with the ambiguity of the definition of what the regional scope should really be. Networks feel limited by the political connotation of the term 'the Balkans' and the

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[3] Outcome mapping is a new approach in international development. It aims to measure results by focussing on behavioural changes in individuals, groups or entities with whom a project or organisation works most closely and concentrates on results or outcomes that fall within the sphere of a project or organisation. See also the Outcome Mapping Community.

'Western Balkans' which is confined to the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania Networks have a broader view of what countries this region includes, counting also Romania, Bulgaria, Greece or Slovenia.

In terms of the *membership size* regional networks can display a high degree of variation. Larger and less formal networks tend to have a large number of members, for example the Igman Initiative is comprised of around 140 members. More formalised networks include around 15 to 20 members. The BCSDN had a certain fluctuation of members as a lot of organisations that are interested in policy work joined, including one member from Turkey.

Moreover, most *networks distinguish between membership and other forms of relationships;* the latter referring to those organisations that benefit from what the network has to offer or that engage with the network on a project or event related basis. For example the Oneworld SEE Network consists of seven member organisations and around 80 partners which are registered with the Internet platform database and benefit from and contribute to the contents of the platform. The SEE Heritage Network allows 'supporters' from civil society, state institutions or the media to attend network meetings and the statutes of the BCSDN provide non-formal networks and CSOs with the possibility to obtain a consultative status in order to take part in the work of the network.

Most regional networks have set out clearly *defined membership criteria and application procedures* manifested in the statutes or specific membership regulations. These comprise a determination of the regional scope as well as eligibility criteria for member status. Some of the more formally organised networks require registration of members according to national laws in the country of origin. Acceptance procedures can include

a recommendation of existing members and an evaluation of the governing entity.

Only two of the regional networks interviewed charge an *annual membership fee* of around 250 to 300 Euros. The BCSDN views a membership fee as a symbolic token in terms of the contribution to the overall budget that reconfirms the commitment of the member organisations although the introduction of the membership fee proved to be difficult. Other networks such the SEE Heritage Network made a clear decision to not introduce a membership fee as they felt that it would prevent smaller organisations with limited resources from joining the network, although a limited number of larger member organisations such as the Open Society Foundation would be able afford it.

3.5 Member participation and ownership

The quality and extent of *member participation and involvement* is *essential for the functioning of a network*. It is in the nature of networks that its members join voluntarily to work towards a common purpose without losing their independence. Yet member ownership is a prerequisite of a successful network. This requires members to see value in the network and to be willing to take responsibility for it. So the key challenge for all networks is how to foster this participation and ownership of its members.

With regard to the *process of decision-making* on network activities and projects, secretariats try to limit themselves to a facilitating role to avoid 'orchestration'. Depending on the size of the network, projects are being discussed and decided on with member organisations during annual board and/or assembly meetings.

Communication is seen an indispensible way of fostering participation of members and the *interrelation between the intensity and quality of communication and the number and size of member organisations* has been highlighted by a number of networks. The more the network is growing in terms of its number of members and the more the individual member organisations grow, the more difficult communication gets between individual network members and also between the network and its members. Some networks have established communication routines using various tools such as Skype or Google-Groups. In particular the Oneworld SEE Network highlighted that new technology makes communication between members easier as the network has moved from using e-mail to using 'civiCRM'.[4]

Network secretariats do not limit communication to the executive level of their member organisations, although they feel the importance of approaching the decision-makers of their members, but also aim to involve a number of staff to avoid individual learning and promote instutionalised links.

An additional challenge highlighted by a number of networks is the *communication and collaboration between network members*. Often communication appears to take place mainly through the secretariat rather than addressing the members of the group directly. The BCSDN established a platform on their Web site to facilitate direct member exchange which turned out to not be used. There was also very limited response to the use of social media, such as Facebook which was used only for outreach. On the other hand face-to-face meetings are also constrained due to very practical issues including travel costs or visa requirements. These constraints change over time when members have the opportunity to

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[·] civiCRM is a free, open source software for relationship management specifically developed for non-profit organisations. See also civiCRM.

implement joint projects which provides the means for more regular meetings.

The *facilitation and promotion of member participation*, for instance obtaining relevant information from members, *consumes a major part of staff time of most network secretariats* who frequently find themselves in a situation to take over tasks in order to ensure timeliness and delivery. In this context expectations of members on how they can potentially benefit from a network constitute an additional challenge, in particular in terms of funding opportunities ('the network is not a donor'), information exchange and required member input. Networks mitigate those expectations primarily through continuous direct and personalized communication to clarify roles and objectives.

Regional networks aim to apply the *principle of subsidiarity*, meaning they do not take on tasks instead of member organisations but only step in when there is a distinct regional component to an issue or a member organisation requires its support. In some instances member organisations take the lead in the implementation of regional projects. For example the Serbian member of the BIRN implements the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence programme and the Balkan Insight, BIRN's weekly online publication, is managed by the Macedonian member organisation. Many networks are the lead or a partner in externally funded projects which are implemented in consortium with other network members. This mode of joint engagement has increased over time, as networks mature. In addition, some networks seek the support of external capacities. The BIRN has repeatedly sought assistance from external consultants or partner organisations for the implementation of regional projects, as member organisations were tied up in local projects. The Igman Initiative has instutionalised the drawing on expert teams available to work on the six specific areas of the Initiatives' engagement.

All in all, *most networks note that the involvement of their members has increased* over time and member organisations have more and more taken on the promotion of the network, input into channels of information and good practice dissemination and cooperation in projects with the network or other member organisations. Trust has been identified as a key factor, indispensible for member organisations to participate in and take ownership of their networks. Participation requires trust which can only grow in time through personal contacts and sufficient opportunity for face-to-face interaction. In order to enable this trust-building, a network should not grow beyond a critical mass of members. Hence, one of the strategies some regional networks apply is to avoid an unconfined increase in membership. A reduced number of members provides an increase of individual organisations obtaining a representation in a board of a network and this in turn leads to increased communication and participation. In the BCSDN, half of the member organisations sit on the board, in the Oneworld SEE Network it is all members. This also goes hand in hand with efforts to *strengthen membership in countries that the network sees as strategically important* for its goals and objectives, for example the BCSDN aims to have an increased focus on strengthening participation of members in Bulgaria and Romania as it views their experience with the EU Structural Funds as valuable input into the network's advocacy and policy work on the IPA financial instrument.

3.6 Network resources

It was observed that the majority of regional networks have *annual strategies and work plans as a basis for project development and consequent fundraising.* Some networks, such as the Network of Education Policy Centers (NEPC), in addition to strategic and work plans, also prepare one to five year business plans that articulate the network's long-

term budgetary projection. Although there is *not always a specific annual funding or longer-term fundraising strategy in place*, work and activity plans are used as a basis that network secretariats and member organisations use for coordinated fundraising. Some networks also conduct internal capacity building assessments, such as SEE Heritage Network, on which basis they plan to fundraise for capacity building projects.

Networks seek funding from institutional donors including the European Union or DfID as well as from major trusts and foundations including the Balkan Trust Fund for Democracy. Moreover some networks developed additional sources of income. For example, as previously mentioned the BCSDN and the NEPC both introduced obligatory annual membership fees where payment regularity is linked to the member's right to vote or attend the assembly. Although these incomes are still rather symbolic when compared to the overall needs and budgets, they are also signs of commitment that usually boost the ownership as well. However, these alternatives are not feasible for networks that represent smaller CSOs where most of the work is done on a volunteer basis. Other networks, such as BIRN that offers news, research and analysis as well as trainings, partially commercialized their services. Also the Oneworld SEE Network has started to offer commercial services, such as the provision of trainings.

Overall, many regional networks are concerned with regard to the *lack of funding of overhead costs or technical support and coordination activities* provided by the secretariats although networks can obtain funding for specific projects and activities. In this regard, the concern was also raised, for example by the Igman Initiative, for the lack of funding for unforeseen activities and necessary interventions that call for a regional meeting or a regional campaign as the time between application for funding and the

kick-in of the funds does not allow for necessary quick, ad-hoc interventions and flexibility.

3.7 External Relations

Regional networks develop relations to a range of relevant external stakeholders including local authorities, government and relevant line ministries, the private sector, academia, the media, relevant CSOs and national and international networks and international organisations and agencies. External relations of regional networks are *mainly managed through the coordinating entity*, either the secretariat or, as in the case of the Igman Initiative, through a lead CSO member. Regional networks mainly use the advantages of ICT to ensure external promotion including Web sites, e-alerts or e-newsletters. Furthermore, attendance at conferences, meetings or other events are viewed as a very important element to promote and represent the network as these are valuable occasions to establish and nurture direct contacts and personal relationships to relevant external stakeholders. A lot of regional networks also promote their *visibility via organised press conferences, press releases and media coverage on position statements* by the network or key events and activities organised by either the network or their member organisations.

The development of *relationships with national governments is also key*, in particular for networks such as the Igman Initiative where the involvement of high-ranking politicians of the region is a core element of their activities. A few networks such as the BCSDN have developed relationships with the private sector when exploring new concepts of relevance for civil society development such as corporate social responsibility.

In addition, an important aspect of networks' external relations is *participation or membership with EU-wide or international networks* when of relevance to their goals and objectives. For example, the BSCDN is a member of APRODEV, CONCORD and the European Citizens' Action Service (ECAS) and participates in relevant working groups focusing on the region and enlargement and pre-accession issues. Also contacts and working relationships with international institutions including relevant General Directorates of the European Commissions and its Delegations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are relevant stakeholders for most of the regional networks.

Moreover, close *cooperation with national civil society networks and CSOs are seen as a crucial element to the effectiveness of a network*. In this context networks also engage in the development of other regional initiatives. Here, many networks, as they identify a need to address a specific theme, may provide support that goes beyond their regular work. For example, the Igman Initiative supported the founding of the Association of the Multiethnic Cities of SEE, while the BCSDN initiated the founding of the regional network on corporate social responsibility. Finally, networks also observed a need for closer cooperation and coordination among different regional networks in order to increase effectiveness and optimize resources while avoiding any overlapping.

Chapter 4: Member motivation for network engagement

When exploring the function of regional networks, it is important to look at why civil society organisations engage with them. This refers back to conditions identified by Rosendal Østergaard and Nielsen (2005) including 'contents, timing and format' referring to relevance, direct usability/timing and how the actual form of the network meets the needs of its members; member 'organisational capacity' to use outcomes of network engagement and their 'organisational culture' of participation. All in all, member organisations participating in the survey outlined several elements around these three preconditions constituting their motivation to join a regional network.

4.1 Relevance, timing and format

The *thematic relevance* of a network's aims and objectives is the primary factor for any member engagement. For example, the members of the NEPC considered the network's expertise on educational policies, its availability and accessibility to a pool of experts on the NEPC database to be vital for their work. Similarly it is important for member organisations of the BIRN to have access to relevant media related themes, such as news and publishing or for the member organisations of the BCSDN to have a voice towards the European Union as the main actor and funding institution in the region. Beyond any thematic relevance, for member organisations from the territory of the former Yugoslavia, *the space provided for cross-border cooperation, peace-building and reconciliation* is of high significance. The regional network acts as a forum or just most natural space where the member organisations from once belligerent sides work closely and inter-dependently. For example the Igman Initiative regularly gathers at its sessions heads of state of the countries of the

Dayton Agreement and thus contributes to the acceleration of the process of normalization of relations among these countries. So far, heads of state participated six times at the Igman Initiative sessions, on three occasions they signed a joint statement prepared by Igman Initiative experts.

Overall, there is an *inherent relevance* that lies in the recognition that a *network is stronger than the sum of its members*. Hence, regional networks are viewed as relevant in terms of access to regional and international fora contributing to an increased reputation of the member organisations and their capacity to advocate for issues of joint concern. These range from increased competence to advocate on a specific issue, for example on education or conservation of the cultural heritage up to the strengthened ability to jointly lobby toward EU on the regional accession road.

In this context an element of motivation also constitutes the *relevance of crosscutting access to learning* ranging from an exchange of practical experience with other members to more formal learning events. Here, member organisations also emphasised access to resources and funds as well as training and assistance as an important motivating factor.

In addition member organisations also emphasised that *timing* is of importance to them, for instance the BCSDN focuses on the Civil Society Facility in particular and civil society involvement into the EU accession process, which in general responds to the need of civil society organisations to access resources and funds and the current developments in the context of shrinking local funds. Timing is also essential in the context of immediate application of what the network has to offer. For example the Oneworld SEE Network offers training that can be put into immediate practice, e.g. the development and content management of a Web site.

Finally, the *relevance of the format* of a network is acknowledged by member organisations as an essential vehicle for a network to respond to member needs. Formally registered networks with a developed executive body such as a secretariat are viewed as important by member organisations. Having a focal point that coordinates activities, disseminates up-to date information, acts as a knowledge hub and executes managerial functions is recognised, by member organisations, as crucial to enable their regional engagement and, with this, to strengthen their capacities. It needs to be noted though that it would be misleading to consider informal or non-registered networks as less effective. Networks such as the Igman Initiative that finds strength in the number of their members has decided to opt for an informal structure to allow for greater flexibility in management. However, regardless of the format of a network member organisations highlighted the importance of the informal relationships whereby the 'formal' members enter into close and informal communication and cooperation with other members.

4.2 Civil Society Organisations' Capacities

The capacities of member organisations were considered in the light of their *ability to utilize the networking outcomes* and to manage their resources in correlation to their engagement with the network. Here, the timing is relevant as some members grew over time and thus increased their networking capacities. For example, one of the member organisations of the BCSDN highlighted their growth over a period of three to five years from only two to a total of twelve staff which enabled an increased engagement with the network. To a very limited extent, hampering factors include language skills of CSO staff to participate in regional network activities. Hence, the added value of regional networks in terms of strengthening CSO's capacity provides a reinforcing factor which in turn increases CSO's capacity to utilize and engage with the network. This

includes specific capacity building activities, for example, BIRN and NEPC members specifically outlined their participation in trainings that had in turn increased their organisational but also individual capacity to apply acquired knowledge and expertise that feeds back to the network.

The involvement of member organisations in the very process of establishing a network strengthens member capacities in mobilizing support not only for the network but also for their own goals and objectives. The history of establishing the BIRN, the Igman Initiative or the BSCDN where the founding members worked over years to develop strategies and regulations, motivate and attract members, are only few examples of a skill that form today's aspects of networking sustainability.

All in all, when it comes to the member's reflection on *opportunities versus the cost* of engaging in networking activities, it was observed that member organisations perceive that opportunities for growth and strengthening outweigh the costs, may it be the membership fee or the input in terms of time or human resources, by far. In this context, member organisations are genuinely committed to goals and objectives of their networks. Even when the member's project portfolio expands dramatically, such as the case with BIRN Kosovo, the organisation reorganised its internal resources in order to fully support a regional project without harming the local project implementation.

4.3 Organisational Culture

As a concept, organisational culture is a sum of the values shared by members that influence their internal but also external interactions. It reflects on behavioural standards used by members to achieve organisational goals. Here, culture of participation acts as a multi-layer concept that is natural when it comes to networking. In this context the

culture of participation and the motivation of member staff to participate and feed into the activities of the regional network they are part of, are important. Most member organisations encourage their staff to pursue collaboration with other organisations and initiatives within their respective areas of responsibility, including pursuing opportunities to meet with people, exchange ideas and learning via training attendance regional exchange programmes. Member organisations generally recognized that regional participation provides new insights, thus giving fresh ideas for organisations to pursue their goals.

Generally, member organisations have an inherent culture of external collaboration and participation evident through their overall external engagement. The majority of member organisations are also engaged in other European, international and regional networks. For instance, TUSEV, a member of the BCSDN, is also a member of the European Foundation Centre, CIVICUS, the International Society for Third Sector Research and WINGS. The Center for Regionalism, a member of the Igman Initiative, is also a member of other regional initiatives including the Civic Dialogue and PHILIA, the Association of Multiethnic Cities.

Most CSOs confirmed that they are actively looking for membership in any association that corresponds to their mission, vision and strategy. International conferences, calls for events and trainings are all used to expand contacts. However, the final decision to join any network is then scrutinized against the CSO's priorities and corresponding relevance. While it is clear that CSOs give participation great importance, the engagement is not undertaken at all costs, it is a rather balanced consideration with the perspective of the long-term benefits for the CSO.

Chapter 5: The added value of regional networks

All in all, regional networks in the IPA countries pursue functions in all three areas as identified by Singh and Stevens (2007) including the sharing of information and resources, the provision of services such as training or other forms of technical support and the influencing of policy makers which contributes to the strengthening and the sustainability of civil society organisations, including member organisations as well as partner organisations, in many ways.

5.1 Facilitation of sharing

The facilitation of information sharing is a key function inherent to all regional networks. It is important to note that there are *two specific target groups* that usually benefit from this network function. First and foremost of course are those organisations that have formal members in their network. In addition, most networks also include a wider, external target group benefitting from any information dissemination mechanisms. Typically these consist of relevant stakeholders and interested parties and professionals in the area or field of work the network engages in. For example the BCSDN initially disseminated e-mail alerts only among members. Over time the dissemination scope was widened to external parties. In this context networks also view the *distribution of information to external stakeholders as a means to raise their profile* as a resource centre and a reference address of expertise.

Furthermore, there are certain network types whose *primary purpose is to function as a resource centre to external stakeholders*. A typical example is the Oneworld SEE Network. The network views itself as a 'civil society

network in the virtual online space' that aims to share information and knowledge being produced by users of the networks internet platform.

For member organisations their networks constitute a key source of information. Member organisations source expertise from the networks and other members alike. Here, both networks and members highlight that information that the network offers has to be of relevance and of immediate use for the member organisations.

For the majority of members, their *network represents a point of reference for expertise that gets systemically consulted,* for example during a project planning phase in order to establish available knowledge and resources. In this regard, members also see a value in their network processing relevant information to an extent that it can be taken in easier and save time, for example Cenzura Plus from Croatia pointed out that the newsletter they are provided with from the BCSDN contains relevant information on matters related to the EU enlargement processes which they would have otherwise to look up directly on the more complex DG enlargement Web pages.

To a limited extent, the function of information sharing also enables networks to pursue 'agenda setting'. For example, the Oneworld SEE Network that regularly informs on all that would be of interest to the CSO community, including issues on women/gender, environment, culture, human rights and activism based on input from members and partners, leads to the promotion of the usage of open software. Networks sense that it is important to package information appropriately and introduce issues to members that might be unknown to them, hence pursuing a learning function.

In addition, networks also play a role in the dissemination of information on funding opportunities within their respective areas of engagement and the development of consortia and project partnership. Here, this has brought about some very concrete results, for example the Initiatives in Serbia managed to obtain funding for two EU funded projects it jointly implements with the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS) in Slovenia.

Despite the difficulties that network secretariats face to ensure that members give input to the information collection and dissemination processes, member organisations generally acknowledge that the information flow within a network is a two-way process. Some member organisations also provide information to the members of their network via their own distribution lists.

Hence, network members profit from existing knowledge, lessons learned and good practices of others and are able to apply what has already been tested. For example, BIRN Kosovo based its Justice Project on a similar initiative implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this context particularly smaller member organisations highlighted the importance of being connected to bigger, more established organisations from which they can learn. Syri I Visionit from Kosovo based its war veterans' project on a similar project methodology of the War Trauma Center from Novi Sad in Serbia and was supported by their fellow member organisation during the implementation process.

Internal learning has an important function for networks and many of them organise learning events for their members by making use of their annual assembly/council meetings which are followed by a day or two dedicated to learning and practice exchange on specific issues either relevant to the area of engagement of member organisations or for their

building management and organisational capacities. Some networks have member organisations that are known for their expertise on specific technical or functional areas that can be consulted by other members when needed. Finally, there is a demand for the development of approaches that facilitate systemic learning among the network and its member organisations in particular in the light of their growth.

Through their networks, members also share resources. First, many of the network members indicate that they profit from relevant tools, instruments and publications and other forms of documentation made available by other members. Second, services are also shared such as editing or financial management services.

In particular, with regard to information sharing and dissemination, the language issue plays a role for a number of networks, especially for those that aim to publish information not only in English but also in regional languages.

Both regional networks and their members feel that although the collection and dissemination of information is an important but time-consuming process, the *value of this essential network function is not acknowledged by international donor agencies*, as demonstrated through the lack of available funding for these particular activities. As a coping strategy, networks as well as member organisations seek to integrate respective activities and allocation of human resources into bigger externally funded projects. The importance of having funding available for these types of activities becomes evident through the example of Syri i Visionit, a member organisation of the Oneworld SEE Network. The organisation was able to have a full staff member available to provide information content for the internet platform when external funding was

available. Following the termination of funding, a volunteer has taken on this task by devoting approximately two hours per day to this function.

5.2 Provision of services

Similarly to their function of facilitating sharing of information and resources, regional networks offer the provision of services not only to their formal member organisations but also to external (civil society) stakeholders.

Civil society organisations that are not members benefit from regional network capacity building and training. There are examples such as the Oneworld SEE Network that have geared their services not only to the 80 partners registered with the internet platform but also newly emerging individual internet activists and volunteers. Here, member organisations work jointly with the network. In Kosovo, the network member Syri I Visionit trained around 150 volunteers on advocacy, journalism, and open technologies such as LINUX. As a positive side effect these trainings have contributed to the professional development of those activists, some of them who obtained employment with lead newspapers and TV broadcasters. Other trainings offered by the network particular offered for CSOs include digital storytelling, Web site development (including set up and content management) and online safety.

Other regional networks such as the BCSDN have made the strategic decision not to pursue capacity building outside their member circle as most of its members act as a capacity resource at the national level and the network does not wish to overlap.
Building capacities of their members, may it be in relation to functional management capacities or technical capacities in their respective fields of work, *is one of the core functions for most regional networks.* For example

the education experts of the NEPC provide trainings through summer schools for the staff of their network members.

Some of the networks such as the SEE Heritage Network and the BIRN have also carried out specific *capacity needs assessments* in order to define capacity building needs of their members to use as a basis for the development of training. Findings revealed a specific need for strengthening member capacities in terms of proposal writing, particularly for IPA funding, networking, advocacy and lobbying and strategic planning.

Networks very much *draw from their more experienced members to act as multipliers* in order to build capacities of their members, an approach that seems to work well. For example, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) of the BCSDN provided training on financial management and the management of institutional grants.

Finally, many networks have highlighted the fact that training and *capacity building measures need to be relevant and something that organisations can directly put into practice*, for example the submission of a proposal or the usage of a Web site.

The majority of *regional networks also provide ongoing technical assistance* to their member organisations. This includes support in the development of project concepts and the writing of proposals for external donors or the preparation of press releases. Members are very much aware of a role they feel they play to support other member organisations especially to avoid an overburden of network secretariat staff. Hence the principle of subsidiarity is also applied in this context by network members who tend to turn towards other members for help before approaching the secretariat. Again, more established and experienced members play an

important part to provide assistance to less experienced network members, for example the Forum for Freedom in Education in Croatia supported NEPC network members with the writing of EU applications.

Again the Oneworld SEE Network stands out due to the nature of its purpose promoting the engagement of civil society organisations in ICT. There were initial concerns by the management of the network that the provision of technical assistance would go beyond the human resources available to the network. However, it soon became clear that hands-on technical assistance was indispensible in order for small inexperienced organisations that would not have the resources to rely on commercial services as back up support when introducing the application of ICT.

5.3 Channels for influence

Through influencing and advocacy a regional network can achieve results that would be difficult for any single member organisation to accomplish alone. Hence for many regional networks, advocacy and lobbying are at the core of their aim to strengthening civil society in the region. For example the BCSDN goal and objectives is to contribute to the strengthening of the voice of civil society organisations in policy- and decision-making at the national and regional level and in particular towards the EU to support civil society dialogue and civil society development in the IPA countries. The BCSDN sees its policy and advocacy work as something that will bring in the end clear benefits to civil society including a voice in the EU engagement process and benefits from EU financial instruments.

For regional networks that act as a channel for influencing the recognition by relevant stakeholders as reliable interlocutors is one of the main achievements so far and a basis for future engagement. Networks

acknowledge that although they only represent their member organisations they advocate for issues that are of relevance to the broader civil society.

Networks apply a range of *influencing mechanisms and tools*. These include country-based and regional research for evidence-based advocacy and the production of policy papers or lobbying for and inputting into consultation processes with local, national and EU stakeholders. Influencing is seen as a permanent process based also on individual contacts.

Moreover, the *creation of platforms to facilitate exchange* between members and stakeholders is seen as something that worked well. For example, the Network of Education Policy Centres organises so-called policy labs which enables consultation of stakeholders from governments and international donor agencies with experts and civil society organisations from the education sector. The BCSDN initiated a number of policy workshops with relevant representatives of DG Enlargement to facilitate a dialogue between member organisations and the EU on civil society development and participation in the accession process. The EU has started to view regional networks as partners that provide distinct expertise. For example, the BCSDN is part of the EU-level advisory body to TACSO. Also the Igman Initiative is currently negotiating with the DG Enlargement on possible partnership.

For member organisations, the *platform their networks provide for consolidated influencing is seen as a key to obtain a stronger voice* on issues that matter to them. In this context, member organisations also feel that their international network partners give them confidence and an enhanced standing with stakeholders. In this regard, members also highlight that joint influencing through a network evolves from very

practical needs and challenges civil society organisations face throughout the region such as the fact that many donor agencies have left the region and governments are called upon to provide funding in light of this. Networks also create support for their national initiatives through public appeals. For example the SEE Heritage Network launched a public appeal to national governments to stop uncontrolled development in urban and rural areas through inadequate spatial planning.

Moreover, member organisations stressed that there is a *specific role for networks focusing on the Western Balkans region* that is complementary to networks representing EU-wide organisations, typically based in Brussels which pool a multitude of interest, at times divergent to the concerns of civil society organisations from the IPA countries.

Finally, not all regional networks engage in influencing and advocacy. There are networks that make a *clear decision not to engage in advocacy and influencing* for a number of reasons. For example the BIRN sees itself as an entity that feels their neutral position as a media watch dog would be jeopardized by lobbying or advocating for specific issues. Other regional networks do not engage in influencing as their objectives gear available human resources to other fields of engagement, for example the Oneworld SEE Network although open in principle to expand to advocacy and influencing has abstained from it as human resources are stretched to provide ICT capacity building. Nevertheless the network supports partner organisations in their campaigning activities by making online campaigning tools available such as the kampagnjainfo.org Web site or by providing other forms of assistance to specific campaigns, for example to the 2009 TakeBackTheTech campaign that promoted the control of technology to end violence against women.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The survey mapped out three existing types of regional CSO networks:

1) Networks with shared branding

The first type involves the establishment of a centralised regional coordinating body which supports the growth of national member associations that share a common, standardized brand with respective regulations and standard procedures applicable for all national member offices. An example of this network type is the BIRN.

2) More formalized networks of independent national CSOs

The second type of network is a formalised, registered entity with a limited number of members CSOs, typically around 15 to 20. Member CSOs are independent entities, carrying their own brand or name but adhering to network membership criteria and actively taking part in the governance of the network through a representation on the network board. Examples of this network type are the BCSDN, the NEPC and the SEE Heritage Network.

3) Larger CSO networks depending on involvement of individual activists and partner organisations

The third type of network can consist of over a hundred members, partner organisations and/or individual activists that are loosely connected around a core group of members of the network who typically would not be very much involved in the steering and the governance of the network but who significantly contribute to different areas of interventions and activities of the network. The degree of formalisation varies accordingly

and does not necessarily involve registration of the network. Examples of this network type are the Igman Initiative and the Oneworld SEE Network.

Despite the existence of these differing types of regional CSO networks, some general conclusions can be drawn:

- **Regional CSO networks typically evolve from externally funded projects**
Although often evolving from externally funded projects and initiatives the majority of regional networks now act as professional entities recognized by relevant stakeholders. Common to all those regional networks is the existence of *committed civil society organizations that took on leading a project based initiative into a formal structure*, a formation process that usually required a commitment over a number of years and additional input beyond these organisations regular engagement.

- **Regional CSO networks evolve from and seek to respond to regional challenges**
It is important to keep in mind that first the foundation and initial establishment of these regional networks is rooted in initiatives *responding to the post-conflict situation* of the region *by aiming to bring different sides together into a wider reconciliation process.* Second, they are rooted in the *response to a more complex contemporary situation including the transition process* that the individual countries and the region as such face.

Hence, regional civil society networks have taken on issues including the EU accession process, education, the media and so forth with the overall aim to ensure that civil society has a voice in this transition process. Moreover, this also reflects a rather mature approach to regional cooperation, clearly stating that only with a transparent and critical

review of the common past, the region can move forward, relying on joint and inter-dependent resources and solutions in which society takes ownership.

- **Regional CSO networks apply a broad view of their regional scope**

In this sense, regional networks also *do not limit themselves to the various definitions of what constitute the Western Balkans or Southeast Europe* or to classifications undertaken by donor agencies, as it is the case of the official candidate and potential candidate countries benefitting from the EU IPA financial instrument. Instead networks *encompass countries that they feel are essential when working towards their specific objectives* in the region.

This leads also to an explanation of why there is a *limited interaction between networks in the Western Balkans and civil society organisations in Turkey* with the exception of the regional networks surveyed the BSCDN and the NEPC reflecting joint themes of interest with regard to EU accession and education. Although inter-governmental cooperation is vibrant (e.g. SEECP or RCC) the cooperation among civil society organisations remains to be strengthened along with developing the capacities to support participation and cooperation mechanisms in Turkey.

- **Regional CSO networks are key for the sustainability of civil society organisations**

Overall, the survey revealed that regional civil society networks play a key and multifaceted role in the strengthening and the sustainability of civil society organisations in the Western Balkans in times of transition. They add value to CSOs by *acting as interlocutors in the provision of information and dissemination of good practice* and lessons learned, the *building of capacities* not only of member organisations but also of the broader civil society and finally, *influencing stakeholders to advance the*

standing of civil society. In this regard, regional networks can also play an important role in the strengthening of civil society in Turkey.

- **The building of social capital and personal communication is essential for the functioning of regional CSO networks**

Regional networks in the Western Balkans face challenges similar to networks of similar sizes and scopes in other regions of the world. It is evident that overall regional networks are aware of these challenges and have developed respective approaches or mitigation strategies to balance them. At the core of this is the *acknowledgement that the social capital of a network is the most important asset that can only be built over time by gaining mutual trust on the basis of personal communication and collaboration.* Most strikingly, the Oneworld SEE Network that originally started its activities as a virtual network also came to this conclusion as their main lesson learned in terms of membership development. Therefore, it has since adjusted their strategy to not exclusively aiming to function as a virtual network but to provide for opportunities for the network to directly communicate and collaborate with members and partners face-to-face.

- **Regional CSO networks aim to apply the principle of subsidiarity in their work with member organisations**

All in all, regional CSO networks aim to apply the *principle of subsidiarity* and aim to only step in when there is a distinct regional component to an issue or a member organisation requires its support. This fosters member ownership of the network but also helps to avoid an overburdening of capacities of the coordinating entity.

- **Inclusiveness of regional CSO networks is ensured through multiple forms of CSO engagement**

In order to ensure the building of social capital, most regional networks have decided to limit the scope and not to go beyond a critical mass of members and countries. Referring back to potential network challenges identified by Singh and Stevens (2007) as described in chapter one, one could initially assume that networks have decided for 'focus' over 'inclusion'. Yet, at the same time *most regional networks ensure their inclusiveness through other modes of engagement*, such as a consultative status (BSCDN), supporter status (SEE Heritage Network) or a partnership (all regional networks). It is noteworthy that *organisations affiliated to these regional networks other than through membership receive similar benefits* in terms of information sharing, for example through regular newsletters or e-mail alerts, servicing including training and other capacity building measures and naturally also from the outcomes of influencing. Therefore regional networks in the IPA countries are far from developing into exclusive interest groups that pursue the interests of only their members.

- **Regional CSO networks emphasize the importance of governance structures**

Even though personal relationships and trust are indispensable for their effectiveness, *regional networks put great value on setting governance structures into place* including the establishment of rules and procedures regulating the roles and responsibilities of their executive and governing bodies as well as eligibility and responsibilities of membership to ensure accountability, not only to external stakeholders but internally to its members and *to avoid an over-personalization of communication and collaboration.*

- **Not all regional CSO networks have M&E frameworks and funding strategies in place**

On the other hand, *although most regional networks have developed multi-annual strategic plans* based on their overall visions and objectives, *these are not accompanied by monitoring frameworks with clearly developed indicators or by matching longer-term fundraising/funding strategies.* Nevertheless, funding needs of networks and potential sources are generally identified jointly with members and respective fundraising is undertaken by both, the secretariats and the member organisations. Networks were able to efficiently support and fund regional activities owing it to ongoing communication and collaboration and a strong consensus on funding needs.

- **Civil society organisations are clear about the costs and benefits of engaging with regional CSO networks**

Civil society organisations are very clear on what forms their motivation to join a particular network. Generally civil society organisations are *aware of membership advantages* and *encouraged by sharing the values* of what they consider will contribute to the democratisation of their respective societies. Moreover, civil society organisations are also *conscious of the costs of such membership*, not only in a monetary sense. Hence there is preceding careful consideration and it is evident that a decision for membership is in strong correlation to the perception of network relevance to the organisations' own aims and objectives, the timing/immediate use of the outcomes and the format of engagement the networks offers.

Also the *capacity to absorb networking outcomes* within their organisations turns out to be key for continuous member organisation engagement. Overall, member organisations confirmed their ability to utilize the membership that they saw evident because of their increased performance. In this context member organisations also indicated the importance of capacity building, carried out by the network or sourced

elsewhere, as relevant for optimizing the networking outcomes. The *existence of a culture of participation* is also viewed as essential for an organisation to join and continuously engage in a network, not only in regional activities and other forms of expanding contributions but also in networks at the EU and international level.

6.2 Recommendations

To TACSO

- TACSO may support the strengthening of regional CSO networks by providing them with the opportunity to engage with relevant regional stakeholders, e.g. through the organisation of a regional conference and respective follow-up events and activities. Here, it would be essential to involve regional CSO networks from the outset, especially in agenda setting.

- Further exploration and evaluation of national CSO networks may contribute to better understanding the overall networking trends and deepen the space for optimising collaboration methods, as regional networks do not work in isolation. In this context consideration should be given to the role played by international and EU funded initiatives such as TACSO.

To TACSO and regional networks

- Establish *coordination mechanisms among regional networks*, for instance an annual conference or joint training learning exchange. As regional networks face similar challenges it would be extremely important to promote the exchange of good practice and lessons learned and cooperation and coordination among regional networks.

- Efforts should be made to *transfer existing knowledge* and lessons learned from regional networks based in the Western Balkans *to support the establishment and strengthening of similar initiatives in Turkey*.

- Regional networks may be supported in developing their capacities further through *more specialized training on network management, tailor-made on the basis of a capacity needs assessment.* The development of the capacity needs assessment methodology and scope should be participatory and with maximum input from the networks.

To regional networks

- Explore the possibility of a *more structured exchange* of service delivery among networks as there are for example specialised networks offering focused services or trainings e.g. on media and journalism (BIRN) or ICT (Oneworld SEE Network).

- Develop *more comprehensive mid-and long-term fundraising strategies* beyond the project level jointly with member organisations to avoid competition for funding sources.

- Develop a *comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system* with indicators measuring progress against objectives. This is essential not only becaues donor agencies request monitoring of outcomes rather than outputs but also for reasons of motivating member and partner organisations. The fact that most networks have defined very long-term objectives makes the development of benchmarks/milestones and respective indicators even more essential – to document and celebrate success on the way.

To the European Union

- Ensure that *sufficient funding is available,* e.g. through the IPA Civil Society Facility to support the roles of regional network secretariats or management entity and that strengthens coordination. Funding per

assessed need would typically have to include e.g. staff and running costs, travel costs for annual meetings or and other collaboration mechanisms, minimum funding for research, publications and so forth. The report revealed that social capital is one of the main assets of regional networks, something that can only be sustained through a high level of communication and personal interaction between the network and its members. Here, the EU would be able to gain reliable partners in the region with expertise beyond project-based relations.

- Make sure to *utilize the vast expertise of civil society organisations concentrated in the regional networks into all stages of the IPA programming cycle*, in particular into the Programming Committee of the IPA Civil Society Facility as regional networks have knowledge and practical know-how in areas covered by the five components of the IPA financial instruments such as education, social inclusion and/or environmental protection.

To national governments

- Support the role of regional CSO networks by *making funding available and use their expertise* in policy processes and the formulation of national action plans and strategies.

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Annex 1 - List of initially identified regional networks

	Name	Acronym	Base/Coordination Office	Coverage	Brief Description	web / internet source
1	Adriatic Region Employers' Centre	n/a	Croatia	Western Balkans	Over the past decades most developed and industrialized countries have experienced a substantial drop in the average age at which individuals retire from the labour market. Europe is facing an unprecedented demographic change, which is especially hitting the new member states hard. The countries of the Western Balkans (WB) are no exception to this trend. As many regions in the new member states, WB countries also see falling populations due to natural decrease and net emigration. The fertility rate is below the threshold needed to renew the population. The trend is even greater for the working age population. Aging could cause potential annual growth in Gross National Product (GNP) in the region to fall. To meet this challenge and compensate for the predicted fall in the working age population, the Network should help the countries of the WB to understand that they need greater employment participation, particularly by older people (55+). Companies and employers need to understand and have to be prepared for this challenge. They need to take actions to successfully manage an aging workforce. In addition they also need to	lidija.horvatic@hup.hr
2	Balkan Anti-Corruption Civic Initiative	BACCI	Croatia, IPA Project	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia	BACCI through its implementation proved to be a role model for cross-country cooperation of the civil society sector in suppression of corruption, especially in the sector of policy monitoring, analysis and design and participation of the CSOs in the policy making process. So far, three stages out of four have been implemented or are in the process of implementation (methodology design, research and analysis and national advocacy actions). The final stage (international advocacy actions) is foreseen to take place in January and February 2011.	http://sites.google.com/site/ipa128286/project-updates/225116bacci%E2%80%93balkananti-corruptioncivicinitiative-projectupdate **or** http://www.psd.hr/hr/index.php?content=page&kat=127

	Name	Acronym	Base/Coordination Office	Coverage	Brief Description	web / internet source
3	Balkan Civil Society Development Network	BCSDN	Macedonia (executive office)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia	The main objectives of BCSDN are to: increase the role of civil society by strengthening its voice in policy- and decision-making on the national, regional and EU level; strengthen communication, coordination and cooperation between civil society actors in the Balkan region; promote civil dialogue between civil society actors, state institutions and the European Union in order to influence public choices; develop civil society by increasing knowledge and skills of civil society actors as a base for higher quality of their work; and promote intercultural dialogue and a culture of resource-sharing as a base for efficient exchange and networking.	http://www.balkancsd.net/
4	Balkan Consumers Union	n/a	Serbia	Balkans countries: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Consumers in the Balkans are generally faced with the same or similar problems. Many products are the same and entire legislations are aimed at harmonization with EU regulations for the purpose of European integration. Consumer organisations from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Croatia have been cooperating for a long time in solving common problems and improving the status of consumers at the national level in their countries. The result of this joint work is a series of common initiatives, projects, transfer of information and good practice, joint participation in programmes of education and training. During this work, the Balkan Consumer Union has noticed a need to strengthen the capacity of this network in a sense of formal registration in order to function and act in a strategic way with the aim of achieving greater progress in the field of consumer protection.	apos@apos.org.rs

	Name	Acronym	Base/Coordination Office	Coverage	Brief Description	web / internet source
5	Balkan Dis/Ability Network	BANNet	Macedonia	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Turkey and Kosovo	BANNet is a regional network of organisations of people with disabilities aimed at advancing the human rights of people with disabilities as a unified voice of DPOs utilizing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other human rights instruments.	elena@polioplus.org.mk
6	Balkan Environmental Life Leadership Standard	BELLS	Serbia, Regional Office	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo	The BELLS movement mission is to be the leader of sustainable development in the countries of the Western Balkans. Through various initiatives, actions and education, they enable citizens of the Western Balkans to fulfil their right to a healthy environment and better economic and social standards.	http://www.bellsmovement.org/
7	Balkan Ecovillage Network	BEN	Croatia	Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia	Development of networks of educational centres that support environmentally-friendly behaviour in the field of food production and renewable sources of energy.	http://meb.ekosela.org/
8	Balkan E-Waste Management Advocacy Network	BEWMAN	Macedonia	Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria	The countries covered by the project include EU member (Bulgaria), EU candidate countries (Croatia and Macedonia), and a country that aspires for EU membership in the future (Serbia). Therefore all the countries targeted by the Action will benefit from the project by increasing their readiness to fully comply with the EU legislation and standards.	http://www.bewman.eu/
9	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network	BIRN	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria	BIRN has members in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, and the BIRN Hub. Together, these organisations pool their resources, connecting their growing teams of specialist journalists – local reporters and analysts – who are trained and supported to produce top-quality, timely and relevant coverage. The regular output of analyses and reporting, Balkan Insight, is frequently backed up with public debates and other events.	http://birn.eu.com/en/1/200/5/

	Name	Acronym	Base/Coordination Office	Coverage	Brief Description	web / internet source
10	Balkan Legal Aid Forum	n/a	Macedonia	Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia	The organisations' founders of this network decided to join their efforts and expertise and to create a regional network of organisations who are working on the field of legal aid and access to justice with the goal to work on the improvement of the current national legal aid systems in which European standards are incorporated.	contact@myla.org.mk
11	Balkan Network for Chemical Safety	BNCS	Macedonia	Macedonia, Albania and Serbia	The aim of creating the Balkan Network for Chemical Safety-BNCS is to make all the stakeholders aware of the lack of knowledge among consumers, producers and policy makers about the EU acquis in the area of product and chemical safety. Whilst increasing consumer protection, the economic changes resulting from the introduction of the acquis will create new challenges for producers and retailers. In dialogue between producers, consumers and policy makers, BNCS will identify best practices which bring added value and benefits for local market actors.	detstvo@detstvo.org.mk

	Name	Acronym	Base/Coordination Office	Coverage	Brief Description	web / internet source
12	Balkan Organic Network	BON	Macedonia	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Kosovo	The Idea for forming the Balkan Organic Network (BON) was born in January 2011 during the "People 2 People study tour on organic agriculture" in Brussels, organised and supported by TACSO/ DG Enlargement. The CSOs interested in creating BON with support from TACSO organised a meeting in July 2011 in Novi Travnik. The idea was presented and elaborated in front of 11 CSOs from seven Balkan countries, and the decision to form the network was taken. The BON founding meeting was organised on September 1 2011 in Skopje. BON was established in order to support closer cooperation between the representing organic production CSOs and the national as well as international competent authorities on the regional level and to enable regional cooperation of CSOs active in organic production.	info@fpopm.com
13	Balkan Regional Early Support Network	BRESN	Kosovo	Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, Slovenia	Established as a regional network of professionals to promote effective early intervention by sharing experience and expertise with all stakeholders at a regional and national level, it builds partnerships and sustainable communication between relevant governmental institutions, professionals and agencies in order to facilitate; early intervention programmes; inclusion as a human right and a better quality of life for individuals with disabilities.	http://bresn.net/

	Name	Acronym	Base/Coordination Office	Coverage	Brief Description	web / internet source
14	Black Sea NGO Network	BSNN	Bulgaria	Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine	BSNN is an independent, non-political, non-governmental, non-profit voluntary association of NGOs from the six Black Sea countries. The goal of which is the facilitation of the free flow and exchange of information, resources and experience for the accomplishment of its mission: to contribute to the protection and rehabilitation of the Black Sea, including the Azov Sea, and to the sustainable development of the Black Sea countries through increased participation of NGOs, governments, businesses and other institutions, as well as the general public.	http://www.bsnn.org/
15	CIVIS - Association of NGOs of SEE	CIVIS	Serbia	Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Romania and Bulgaria	The association CIVIS was founded on 4 June 2007 by the representatives of the non-governmental organisations from Serbia and southeast Europe. CIVIS promotes ideas and values of the European Union and the Council of Europe, stimulates the cooperation of the NGOs in order to accelerate the process of European integration of the countries that are not yet member states of the EU, as well as cross-border and regional cooperation of the NGOs, municipalities, entrepreneurs and citizens. From January 2008 CIVIS takes full part in the activities of the Council of Europe's Conference of International NGOs.	http://www.civis-see.org/eng/index.html
16	Central European CSOsNet	n/a	Bosnia and Herzegovina (in the process of registration)	18 countries of Central, Eastern and SE Europe	NGO Network in 18 countries to support cross-border cooperation. As of June 2011 they are in the process of registration and setting up a secretariat in Sarajevo.	http://www.balkan24.com/blogindex/toptema/3655-mrea-civilnog-drutva-pod-okriljem-cei-angaovano-graanstvo-je-in.html

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17	Civic Dialogue	CiD	Serbia, Kosovo	regional	Civic Dialogue (CiD), a non-partisan, multi-ethnic initiative of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from Serbia and Kosovo, was launched in 2002 to abrogate the consequences of the violent conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Civic Dialogue is an initiative that engages over 250 NGOs from Kosovo, Serbia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia. Two NGOs, the Novi Sad-based Center for Regionalism and the Pristine-based "Mother Theresa" Society, are the founding partners.	http://www.civil-dialogue.org/
18	Coalition of Balkans Women's Business Associations	n/a	n/a	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey	Promotion of women business entrepreneurs	http://www.ciperomania.org/dyn-doc/working%20structure.pdf
19	Coalition for Regional Cooperation and European Integration	COREI	n/a	Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia	Regional network of NGOs and think tank organisations were initially gathered around the project Regional Framework for Development and European Integration, implemented in 2006/2007. During the evaluation of the project, the idea was coined to further the cooperation in to a network and as such it continues to function.	http://www.corei.org/?id=1,1
20	Citizens Pact for SEE	CP	Serbia	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia	The Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe is a network of NGOs and municipalities throughout SEE, aiming to contribute to the development of the civil society and stability in Southeastern Europe, by strengthening cross-border co-operation and partner relations among local governments and non-governmental organisations.	http://www.citizenspact.org/new/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

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21	Danube Network - International Sports Project	n/a	Croatia	Croatia, Serbia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine	Regional cooperation promoted via sport, culture and economy.	http://www.dunavskamreza.net/
22	Decade Watch	n/a	separate for each country	Roma Decade Countries	Decade Watch is the first assessment of government actions on implementing the commitments expressed under the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015. Since the Decade aims at giving Roma a voice in the process of inclusion, this assessment has been conducted by coalitions of Roma NGOs and activists from all countries participating in the Decade. Decade Watch is a contribution by Roma activists toward making the Decade a success.	http://www.romadecade.org/about_decade_watch
23	GMO-free SEE countries	n/a	Macedonia	SEE region	The network aims to raise awareness and develop capacity-building activities for CSOs in the SEE countries regarding GMOs and development of organic agriculture, as well as to initiate spreading of information in other SEE countries, through partner environmental organisations (networking), using our knowledge and experience from working on the GMO issue and organic agriculture.	www.vilazora.org.mk
24	Green Agenda Network	n/a	Macedonia	Regional	Green Agenda Network is the sharing pool of the project "Joining Forces for Sustainable Future in the Western Balkans". It gathers NGOs and local communities from: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. It has been initiated and established by Milieukontakt International with the aim to promote peace, stability and sustainable development in the Western Balkan, through fostering regional cooperation and networking.	http://www.greenagenda.net/wp/

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25	Igman Initiative	n/a	Serbia (NGO Centre for Regionalism, Novi Sad)	Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro	Centre for Regionalism, Forum of Democratic Alternative from Sarajevo and Civic Committee for Human Rights from Zagreb are the protagonists of the initiative for the founding of the movement of NGOs with the aim of relations' normalization and reconciliation in the Dayton triangle among Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (Kosovo). The movement was founded in Zagreb in November 2000 and it gathers over 140 NGOs from these countries. Igman Initiative's mission is to promote and facilitate local and regional dialogue in the fields of politics, economy and culture; to promote confidence building and advocacy of democratic values.	http://www.igman-initiative.org/index.htm
26	Monitoring Chapter 23 non-formal network	n/a	Croatia	Croatia - Montenegro	Transferring knowledge and experience of Croatian CSOs on monitoring EU negotiations especially related to Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights.	gordan.bosanac@cms.hr
27	Network for Banning and Phasing out Asbestos in Western Balkan Countries	KAPAZ	Macedonia	Western Balkan Countries	KAPAZ Network is established in the framework of the EU funded project "Capacity Building for Banning and Phasing out Asbestos in West Balkan Countries" (Budget line: B-2008-22.02.07.01-C1 Reference: EuropeAid/128287/C/ACT/MULTI) realized from December 2009 until June 2011 in Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria. The Network was promoted at the Balkan conference about asbestos, initiative held from 19th to 21st June 2010. The aim of the network is networking and partnership, strengthening capacities, exchanging experiences, and realizing common projects.	comtact@gaussinstitute.org igor.nedelkovski@gmail.com

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28	Network of Education Policy Centres	NEPC	Croatia	20 countries, including the WB and Turkey	Network of Education Policy Centres with its 23 institutional members and five individual members in 20 countries has three years of successful common project work and professional growth in the area of educational policy and related topics. It has been institutionalized as an international NGO. As of January 2008, the Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC) is registered, in Croatia and according to Croatian law, as an independent and not-for-profit organisation and association of institutional and individual members.	http://www.edupolicy.net/
29	The Network of Low HIV Prevalence Countries in Central and Southeast Europe	NeLP	Serbia/Macedonia	Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Hungary	NeLP is the regional network of CSOs working in the field of HIV/AIDS in the Low HIV Prevalence Countries in Central and South East Europe. NeLP calls for international attention to the serious HIV conditions in Central and South East Europe. Unlike the high prevalence HIV epidemic raging in North East Europe or the more mature epidemic to the West, the HIV epidemic in these countries is low prevalence. Nonetheless it can be deadly. NeLP believes it can bring more positive attention to the serious HIV conditions in this region. Through mutual support, information sharing, capacity building and coordinated activities, NeLP hopes to overcome the obstacles to quality treatment and care, comprehensive and evidence-based prevention programmes, and successful legislative reforms, which have troubled our regions for so long.	www.q-club.org.rs www.hera.org.mk

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30	Network of Roma Education Initiative (REI) Partners	REI	project based	Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia	The Roma Education Initiative (REI) finished in December 2005, marking the end of its four-year term (2002-2005). The REI projects have been implemented via consortiums of local partners, including more than 40 education and Roma NGOs. Strategic alliances represent an avenue for fostering positive change on multiple levels. Experience has demonstrated that such broad-based coalitions are necessary for success.	http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Network%20Key%20Partners.html#pocetak
31	New Politics of Solidarity	NPS	Serbia	Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosova, Slovenia and Serbia	New Politics of Solidarity (NPS) is a long-term programme, which has been developed and implemented by the Center for Cultural Decontamination from Belgrade. NPS addresses the root causes of social divisions, disintegrations, disputes and explores new forms of commonality and social cohesion based on universal values and human rights. Through a variety of performative acts – conceptualized as spoken or written text, theatre play, documentary, non-verbal play can bring about in human interactions - people with different social, intellectual, political and cultural identities communicate their ideas, thoughts, concerns, interests, visions how to make their own societies and our common world a better place to live. To keep NPS program sustainable, CZKD and its network have entered a new chapter, which is to give a voice to a variety of marginalized social and interest groups, to help them to meet, to listen to each other and identify their common values, interests, recognize their social and political relevance and importance, their responsibilities for their own and life of their communities/societies.	info@czkd.org www.czkd.org

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32	Nomad Dance Academy	NDA	Serbia	Balkan Region, +Austria, Belgium, and Romania	Since its foundation in 2005, the mission of NDA is a self-organised, open and sustainable platform for contemporary performing arts that initiates and supports educational processes in all segments of the art field and transfer of knowledge in the Balkan region and internationally.	marijana.cvetkovic@gmail.com
33	One World SEE	OWPSEE	web based	South Eastern Europe	Oneworld – platform for south east Europe (owpsee) is a civil society network in the virtual online space. The portal www.oneworldsee.org and all newer supported platforms use information to enable civil society collaboration and mutual learning in the region. Through a diverse strategy, but with the same aim, the second identity is that of a community and network for/of civil society itself. OWPSEE provides civil society with knowledge about particular themes, issues and developments, and helps CSOs to work together.	http://oneworldsee.org/about-us
34	Open Peace Network	OPN	initiated in Croatia	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Macedonia	The Network was initiated in May 2010 by mainly women's organisations from the region of the former Yugoslavia, to promote peace and non-violence via cross-sector projects and activities.	http://zenska-akcija-rijeka.blog.hr/
35	PHILIA - Association of Multi-ethnic Cities in SEE	n/a	Serbia	Croatia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.	The Association was founded in 2003 deriving from the project of the Igman Initiative - a micro project for building cooperation between the cities in the triangle Tuzla-Osijek-Novi Sad, based on the Agreement on Interethnic Tolerance. The Association functionally answers the need to periodically compare experiences, analyse general problems and determine joint priorities for the activities of the civil society sector and local authorities on the improvement of interethnic tolerance and cooperation, based on the principals of The European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Basic Liberties	http://www.centarzaregionalizam.org.rs/philia/html/index1.htm

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36	Regional Commission	RECOM	Serbia, Fond za Humanitarno Pravo - Beograd acts as coordinator	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Macedonia, Kosovo	It consists of a network of non-governmental organisations, associations, and individuals who represent and promote the Initiative for RECOM towards the establishment of a Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the period from 1991-2001 (RECOM).	http://www.zarekom.org/The-Coalition-for-RECOM.en.html
37	Regional Coordination of Associations of Missing Persons Families from ex-Yugoslavia	n/a	n/a	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro	The regional coordination gathers associations from the countries of the former Yugoslavia, working on the problem of missing persons.	http://www.ic-mp.org/BA/press-releases/representatives-of-families-of-the-missing-from-the-western-balkans-gather-in-sarajevo-predstavnici-porodica-nestalih-iz-zapadnog-balkana-okupili-su-se-u-sarajevu/
38	Regional Network on Corporate Social Responsibility	n/a	in the process of formation, Secretariat to be established in Montenegro	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia	Cross-border cooperation on corporate social responsibility.	http://www.balkancsd.net/bcsdn-news/73-local-csos-initiate-regional-network-on-corporate-social-responsibility.html
39	Regional LGBT network	n/a	Turkey-Croatia	Balkans, Caucasus, Arab World (North Africa, Middle East)	The aim of the network is to increase cooperation between LGBT organisations from the Balkans, Caucasus and Arab world due to the common roots of homophobia (nationalism, national conflicts, religion, patriarchies) in this geographic area.	pr@queerzagreb.org
40	Regional Network for Gender/Women's Studies in SEE	n/a	Macedonia (secretariat)	regional		http://www.gendersee.org.mk/index.asp *(website not active in august 2011)*: also source via http://www.zenstud.hr/images/pdf/callforapplications.pdf *or* http://www.euba.edu.mk/who-we-are.html

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41	Regional Network for Interculturalism and Non-Discrimination	n/a	Macedonia	Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Turkey	Four organisations Union of Balkan Egyptians UBE, Albanian Human Rights Group AHRG, Gorska Ruža Rakovac and Turkey Disable's Education and Solidarity Foundation seek to establish a network in order to jointly act in advocacy and lobbying on combating discrimination and intolerance on ethnic, religious, gender or any other differences, as well as towards people with disabilities.	ubegypt@t-home.mk
42	Regional Network of local donors for sustainable development of local communities and civil society	n/a	Croatia (regional coordination office)	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro	To promote and support the development of local philanthropy, local communities and long-term sustainability of civil society in six countries in Southeast Europe national, regional and EU levels.	source via http://civicamobilitas.org.mk/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=3
43	Regional Network Objection for Peace	n/a	n/a	Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia	Regional network "Objection for peace" was formed in February 2003 with the task to define and recognize the right to conscientious objection on a regional level, in the public, as well in official legislature. The network from it's beginning was constituted by "Mirovna Akcija" form Macedonia, "EBCO Balkan" from Serbia, "Nansen Dijalog Centar" from Montenegro, "Campaign for conscientious objection in BiH" (represented by "Zasto ne" from Sarajevo) and "Antiratna kampanja" from Croatia.	http://oneworldsee.org/sq/node/406
44	Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in SEE	RWL	Kosovo	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia.	Founded in 2006, the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe brings together women politicians and activists from the region who are committed to the goals of deepening human security, promoting women's rights and participation in decision-making processes and breaking barriers of ethno-centric politics. The Lobby has a total of 27 members from the seven different countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.	http://rwlsee.org/

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45	"Right to the Village" - Alliance for Rural and Small Communities Cultural Development	n/a	Macedonia	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia and Greece	Right to the Village - Alliance for Rural and Small Communities Cultural Development is a network of developmental, cultural, local and community oriented organisations from the Western Balkans, joined together around the accomplishment of the shared vision of sustainable rural cultural and social development of the villages and small communities.	www.scca.org.mk www.rcc.org.mk www.reka.org.mk
46	Roma Women Empowerment Regional Project	n/a		Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro	A regional response to the issue that is common for all four countries as well as the replication of best practice models within the region that would lead to improved policies related to discrimination of Roma people and particularly Roma women in the target region. This is a CARE project.	http://www.carenwb.org/index.php?sadrzaj=1&task=viewsubcat&skid=30&catid=3
47	South East European Heritage Network	SEE Heritage Network	Montenegro (secretariat)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania	South East European (SEE) Heritage is a network of non-governmental organisations from South East Europe, established in 2006. The mission of the SEE Heritage network is to work towards protecting and promoting the common cultural heritage with the aim of encouraging sustainable development of the region. The vision of the SEE Heritage network: South East Europe (SEE) - region where people cooperate, understand and respect each other on the basis of their cultural differences, believing that cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is a valuable resource.	http://www.seeheritage.org/
48	South East Europe Business Incubators Network	n/a	Macedonia	Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania	The basic purpose of the network is to initiate cooperation among all incubators in the region, and to achieve recognition (by academic institutions, business sector, local and central government) for the importance of business incubation models as a significant instrument for economic development.	natasa.petkova@yes.org.mk

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49	South Eastern European Mediation Forum	SEEMF	Montenegro	eastern Balkans	The South Eastern European Mediation Forum (SEEMF) as regional network of mediators that supports and advocates the development of mediation in South Eastern Europe – the former Yugoslavia and Albania, was founded in Sarajevo, 2005 and was formally registered in Podgorica, May 2011. SEEMF is working on professionalizing the use of mediation in the region.	posredovanje@t-com.me
50	South East Europe Network on Energy and Transport	SEENET	Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia	Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Monte Negro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia	Problems related to hydro power projects in different countries of SEE have been recognized by the members of SEENET through which there are potentials for developing skills and capacities to work on stopping or changing unsustainable hydropower programmes and projects of national governments of the SEE region and joint work on policy level.	za@zelena-akcija.hr
51	South East European Network of Private Broadcasters	SEENPB	Bosnia and Herzegovina	regional	Network of associations of national private electronic media established in 2000 to support the development of independent media in the region. (home Web site is no longer active at http://www.seenapb.org/)	http://www.hurin.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54&Itemid=53
52	Southeast European Policy Research Association	SEEPRA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia	SEEPRA aims to provide systematic action in order to promote policy research and policy development by independent think-tanks especially among government officials and civic society stakeholders; enhance the capacity of policy research think-tanks in SEE; and establish quality standards and ethical norms for the field of policy research.	info@analitika.ba

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53	South Eastern European Queer Network	SEE Q Network	n/a	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo/a, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia.	South-eastern European Queer Network of LGBTIQ activists from the former Yugoslavia (SEE Q Network) is a regional network of LGBTIQ activists and representatives of approximately 20 LGBT organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo/a, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia.	http://www.queer.ba/?q=en/seeqnetwork
54	South East European Youth Network	SEEYN	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Bulgaria, Albania, Slovenia	The South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) is a network of organisations involving 15 member NGOs from 8 countries in an attempt to overcome differences among societies that have a recent tradition of conflicts by gathering young people from the entire South East Europe region to work together on global issues. SEEYN aims to promote pro-social values, youth employability, peace and understanding through the development of volunteering grassroots and exchange programmes, supporting youth initiatives, advocacy and capacity building.	http://www.seeyn.org/
55	Turkey and Armenia NGO Network Project	TANGO	web based	Turkey and Armenia	Funded by the German Marshall Fund under the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, Turkey and Armenia Non-Governmental Organisations Network Project (TANGO Network Project) has been started to implement the Corporate Social Responsibility Association of Turkey –CSR Turkey- and Armenian Marketing Association –AMA- in June 2010. The project aims to form a web based platform to set new partnerships and further collaborations between Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from Turkey and Armenia which will constructively contribute to the relationship of the countries together with the positive developments of cultural, economical and governmental attempts.	http://tangonetwork.org/Default.asp

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56	Western Balkan Region Network	n/a	Macedonia	Western Balkans	The network will connect the efforts for stronger promotion of the concept of regional development in the Western Balkan (WB) countries.	fillip.sekuloski@predaplus.eu
57	Women's Peace Coalition	n/a	Belgrade/Pristine	Kosovo, Serbia	The Women's Peace Coalition was established by the Women in Black Network and Kosovo Women's Network in March 2006 as an independent citizens' initiative founded on women's solidarity that crosses divisions of ethnicity and religion, as well as state borders and barriers.	http://www.womensnetwork.org/otherreports/52womenspeacecoalitionreport_english.html
58	Western Balkan Network of Schools of Political Studies	n/a	Serbia	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	The key objective of the Network is promoting the universal values of democracy and human rights through training political, economic, social and cultural leaders in countries in transition. All partners are CSOs set up under the legislation of the country in which they are located.	office@bfpe.org

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59	Western Balkan Rural Development Network	WBRDN	Bosnia and Herzegovina	All Western Balkan countries	Several local civil society organisations from the Western Balkan countries (Institute for Democracy and Mediation – IDM from Albania, Foundation Agro-Centre for Education – FACE from Macedonia, Agency for Cooperation, Education and Development from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Natura Balkanika from Serbia, etc.) have initiated the establishment of Western Balkan Rural Development Network – WBRDN that will work in all Western Balkan countries. These organisations are strong partners from a previous period where they participated in the implementation of a joint TEMPUS project. In many countries of the WB, National Rural Development Networks have been established. These networks are the main actor in mobilising CSOs active in rural development and in influencing relevant policy preparation and implementation in the agriculture and rural development sector. Taking into account the very similar position of each Balkan country in the EU accession process it is obvious that regional cooperation and partnership can help CSOs and other stakeholders in better policy creation and programmes implementation.	m.matavulj@aced.ba
60	Youth Initiative for Human Rights	YIHR	separate for each country	Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.	The Youth Initiative for Human Rights is a regional network of non-governmental organisations with programmes on the territories of Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Initiative was formed by young people from these countries in order to enhance youth participation in the democratization of the society and empowerment of the rule of law through the process of facing the past and establishing new, progressive connections in the post-conflict region of former Yugoslavia.	http://www.yihr.org/en/

Contact details

Regional Office
Potoklinica 16
71 000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
info@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Albania
Rr" Donika Kastrioti" | "Kotoni" Business Centre
K-2 Tirana
Albania
info.al@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Kalesijska 14/3
71 000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
info.ba@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Croatia
Amruševa 10/1
10 000 Zagreb
Croatia
info.hr@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99
Fazli Grajqevci 4/a
10000 Pristina
Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99
info.ko@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
11 Oktomvri 6/1-3
1000 Skopje
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
info.mk@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Montenegro
Dalmatinska 78
20000 Podgorica
Montenegro
info.me@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Serbia
Spanskih boraca 24 - stan broj 3
11070 Novi Beograd
Serbia
info.rs@tacso.org

T/A Help Desk for
Turkey
Gulden Sk. 2/2
Kavaklidere 06690
Ankara

Dumen sokak. Mutlu Apt. 7/14
Gumussuyu Beyoglu
Istanbul
Turkey
info.tr@tacso.org

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