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Assistance in the Process of Peacebuilding:  
The Case of EU Enlargement**

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# THE ROLE OF THE EU'S CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE PROCESS OF PEACEBUILDING: THE CASE OF EU ENLARGEMENT

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*ABSTRACT: This article presents the role of civil society in peacebuilding processes and how the concepts of peacebuilding and civil society development fit into a broader EU foreign policy framework. In its empirical part, this article analyses the role of civil society development as part of the EU's current enlargement policy. The reason the EU's enlargement policy was selected for analysis is because it is the only EU policy that comprehensively addresses various causes of instabilities in post-conflict countries, which is crucial for the peacebuilding process. This article demonstrates that through its enlargement policy, the EU addresses various aspects of developing civil society; however, it does not equally emphasise civil society development in individual enlargement countries, while the results of the policy are limited. This article concludes that the EU should address civil society development in a more holistic way, while it should also devote more attention to the inclusion of the local civil society in drafting and the implementation of EU-driven reforms in the region.*

**KEYWORDS:** civil society, enlargement, EU's foreign policy, peacebuilding

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the nature of armed conflicts after the Cold War, peacebuilding activities are gaining in importance. The awareness that new forms of local conflicts can destabilise entire regions and also have profound international effects, assured an increase of studies in the democratisation process, post-conflict reconstruction practices and other related fields. The formation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (2005) is evidence that developing

knowledge in peacebuilding activities to achieve security is placed high on the agenda of the international community, and one – perhaps the most important – task of the Commission is to ‘develop best practices on issues in collaboration with political, security, humanitarian and development actors.’<sup>1</sup> However, developing such practices is believed to be too daunting for the Commission’s scarce resources.<sup>2</sup>

The research question of this work is to what extent the European Union (EU) plays the role of a developer and implementer of such practices in order to achieve its foreign policy goals in the field of civil society development, and how successful is it at playing that role? The article focuses on the EU’s enlargement policy, because, as described below, the policy was identified as the most successful and comprehensive peacebuilding policy of the Union.

The article will first present the concept of peacebuilding and the role of civil society development in that process. Then it will briefly discuss what role peacebuilding plays, and with that, the development of civil society in the EU’s foreign policy. In the empirical part, civil society development policies towards the enlargement countries will be presented and assessed. The empirical analysis will not focus on civil society projects in specific countries, but rather will compare the importance of developing a civil society in the enlargement countries through analysing different EU instruments that encompass civil society development programmes.

#### PEACEBUILDING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

According to Galtung, peacebuilding addresses the underlying causes of violent conflict in order to assure that the conflict will not erupt again.<sup>3</sup> It is a very complex process that involves addressing the underlying reasons for a conflict on a political, economic and social level in a given society, where the (re)construction of the former is, to some extent, a precondition for the successful (re)construction of the latter two.<sup>4</sup> Developing a civil society during the process of peacebuilding is important for various reasons. First, it is important for political reconstruction of the country. There exists consensus that long-term peace can only be assured through democratic decision-making,<sup>5</sup> and the indispensable part of democratic

governance is a developed civil society. This is because a developed civil society increases the degree of freedom for citizens, reduces state corruption, promotes the rule of law and establishes greater government effectiveness. Civil society organisations (CSOs)<sup>6</sup> are also valuable sources of information to state elites, which can tell what people in a country truly want and expect from the state. In addition, states with a strong civil society are more politically stable, while CSOs can train citizens to be tolerant, co-operative and reciprocal. In a situation where a state has just emerged from a violent conflict, it is noteworthy that states with a highly dense local NGO network have a greater capacity to ‘invite foreign foundations, think tanks, international policy networks, and solidarity groups into their nations to monitor their state’s performance as it relates to democratic state building.’<sup>7</sup>

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There exist two “versions” of civil society with different pro-democratic effects. An *advocacy* civil society is comprised of large, membership-based organisations that are involved in political or social activities and are focused on representing the interests of their members to the political society. Those CSOs which include, e.g. human rights, environmental, women and youth organisations, and CSOs dealing with politics in general, perform the functions of interest articulation and checking state power. The second version of a civil society is represented by smaller, apolitical CSOs that perform the function of strengthening democratic values and are increasing the capacity of the individual for political participation. Uhlin concludes that both versions are essential for a consolidated democracy.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally civil society development in the specific environment of post-conflict countries is important for the purpose of reconciliation between former warring parties, since the process of reconciliation is important for the rebuilding of trust between the former opposite sides in a conflict.<sup>9</sup> Such trust is needed if a society wants to implement reforms that are usually much needed after a violent conflict. Thus, in the peacebuilding process, civil society organisations that develop cross-factional dialogue and co-operation on the grass-roots level are especially precious.<sup>10</sup> Barnes concludes that it is impossible for international actors to achieve long-lasting peace in a given country without the engagement of a wider society in the process of peacebuilding, since CSOs have

the capacity to support change in how individuals address the conflict and are, on the other hand, able to redirect attention to the underlying causes of it, while on the level of a wider society, they are effective in highlighting the potential costs of the renewal of a violent conflict.<sup>11</sup>

#### EU FOREIGN POLICY: PEACEBUILDING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CIVIL SOCIETY

The EU's international actions are officially guided by the principles of 'democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law,'<sup>12</sup> sustainable development and good governance.<sup>13</sup> Adherence to those principles and setting them as foreign policy priorities casts the EU as a so-called "normative power": and to promote those principles on the international stage, the EU uses the power of persuasion rather than physical force.<sup>14</sup> In Manners' opinion, the EU is a much needed actor in the current international arena, since only such normative action has the right answers for what he calls four catastrophic failures that will define the near future of world politics.<sup>15</sup> However, he admits that the EU still does not have a sufficient array of tools to promote those principles holistically,<sup>16</sup> even though it does promote them at least to some extent through some of its foreign policies (Enlargement; European Neighbourhood Policy; African, Caribbean and Pacific Relations; and Strategic Partnerships).<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Laïdi argues that the EU uses norm promotion to compensate for its lack of hard power and is thus 'forced to impose its norms on the world system on a fragmentary basis [in order] to mollify power politics through norms.'<sup>18</sup> This is why the EU is most effective on issues that address global public goods, such as the environment, international justice and sustainable development, while it is much less effective at achieving harder security or diplomatic goals.<sup>19</sup> However, often the foreign policy behaviour of the EU must not be classified as normative. Indeed, Youngs claims that the EU's foreign policy often contains strategic calculations and rationality that often weaken the principle of normativity.<sup>20</sup> Warkotsch agrees with that critique and emphasises that the EU

invests in norm promotion when it assesses that this promotion could be successful, while in other cases, the EU must behave strategically.<sup>21</sup>

Peace-building activities may be linked to either theory of the EU's foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> Regarding the EU's official commitments; the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and good governance are, by definition, also peacebuilding activities when they take place in an unstable country. In addressing Manners' failure of the international community in fulfilling the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, peacebuilding activities should also play an important role, especially in post-conflict countries. Additionally, peacebuilding policy is not incompatible with Laïdi's more self-centred goals of norm promotion. Development and the promotion of peacebuilding as an alternative to hard power deployments could serve the EU well in the world, where global security threats come in the form of terrorist and criminal organisations that are the product of, or being sheltered by, unstable countries. Since the European Security Strategy names those organisations as main threats to the EU's security,<sup>23</sup> investment into peacebuilding seems to be prudent, even from a realist perspective.

In practice, the EU has already demonstrated an ability to conduct actions in pursuit of such principles.<sup>24</sup> Various policies of the EU include peacebuilding elements; the enlargement policy, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), policies toward Asia, development policy and others. Concerning enlargement, the EU helps candidate and potential candidate countries<sup>25</sup> fulfil the Accession criteria,<sup>26</sup> provides funds and technical assistance, is actively included in conflict prevention activities, and advocates the needed reforms that would stabilise the countries. The CSDP's civilian missions all contain one of the four following tasks: police activity (training of local police forces); the establishment of the rule of law; support for the civil administration and/or; civil protection, and can all be regarded as peacebuilding activities. The ENP is an example of the EU's pre-emptive<sup>27</sup> peacebuilding activities since the countries that are included in the policy face potentially destabilising problems in the future.<sup>28</sup> The nature of the EU's help in the framework of the ENP is mostly of an economic nature since the political aspects, such as democratisation and the rule of law, are often too sensitive to be

addressed,<sup>29</sup> even though an official goal of the EU is to promote political norms.<sup>30</sup> As regards to relations between the EU and Asia, the EU donates large amounts of aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan,<sup>31</sup> while the basis for co-operation between the EU and countries of South Asia is economic and development assistance from the EU.<sup>32</sup> The development assistance of the EU is carried out through the Europe Aid Directorate-General, and is composed of financial assistance for different developmental projects in unstable countries.<sup>33</sup>

However, as noted, adherence to different goals of peacebuilding, which are reflected in the EU's official principles of conducting its foreign policy, varies. For the enlargement policy, the pursuit of official principles seems to be the most earnest, since the goal of the EU is the full incorporation of enlargement countries into the Union and enlargement obviously cannot be followed through without focusing on the underlying causes of instability in those countries. However the EU is not ready to officially assume responsibility for its actions; i.e. its involvement makes it co-responsible for the future of those countries, and the policies towards enlargement countries seem to be incoherent.<sup>34</sup> The ENP could better resemble a strategic calculation of norm promotion. The EU selectively exports norms to those ENP countries which see the prospects of eventual accession into the EU are (slowly) accepting them, while the others that see no such prospect in the near future, reject them.<sup>35</sup>

As regards the latter countries, the EU seems to base its conduct on a form of *realpolitik* towards them. For instance, in Libya the EU conveniently forgot about norm promotion so it could enhance its own energy security. It even sold arms to the Libyan authorities for the cause of fighting illegal immigration,<sup>36</sup> though this practise has been suspended in light of the recent wave of political unrest in the country. Energy security seems to be the most difficult test for the EU's policy of norm promotion.<sup>37</sup> Regarding development policies, it could be speculated that the EU promotes norms to maintain or build aspects of its international image and thus to generate political capital, even though some good practices could be gathered from the EU's activities in that field.

The EU's civil society development in post-conflict or unstable countries is conducted through various policies and with different

intensity. The most comprehensive peacebuilding policy that includes the activities for the development of a civil society is the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for candidate and potential candidate countries, since it aims to address

the needs of the beneficiary countries within the context of pre-accession in the most appropriate way. Its main aim is to support institution-building and the rule of law, human rights, including the fundamental freedoms, minority rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, both administrative and economic reforms, economic and social development, reconciliation and reconstruction, and regional and cross-border cooperation.<sup>38</sup>

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Besides IPA, Rihackova identifies five other instruments, utilised by the European Commission (EC), for which it could also be argued that they conduct some peacebuilding activities, aimed at the development of a civil society. These are:

- European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), with a budget of €1.1 billion for 2007-2013 is mostly devoted to support the development of CSOs;
- Instrument for Stability (IfS), a crisis response instrument that includes support to non-state actors;
- Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI), with one of its main aims to consolidate and support democracy, human rights, gender equality, and which also envisages support to non-state actors;
- European Development Fund (EDF), aimed at African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and Overseas Countries and Territories, for which it could be argued that some projects (e.g. educational) also contribute to the development of a civil society.
- European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), which is not seen as a democracy assistance tool by the Commission but for which could be, as in the case of EDF, argued that its educational dimension contributes to the development of a civil society.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from the EC, the Council under the CFSP also supports democratisation and human rights projects<sup>40</sup> while the policies of the individual member states emphasise the development of civil society as well.<sup>41</sup>



However, in the past, the EU was criticised for focusing on a “top-down” style of institution-building which neglects the development of civil society,<sup>42</sup> while the predominant opinion of the Commission remains that a country cannot change itself without its politicians being involved in the process, and the development of a civil society is supposed to play only a complementary role.<sup>43</sup> Even though most EU policies towards unstable regions support peacebuilding *activities*, they do not support the peacebuilding *process* in the relevant countries (apart from the enlargement policy), since they do not address the underlying causes of conflict in a holistic way. The latter is essential if one wants to achieve a self-sustained peace in a certain area,<sup>44</sup> while the long-term commitment of the EU to those activities is also not assured. Even though substantial funds and means are invested into the EU’s development programmes, those programmes are global in reach and address a wide array of countries. Therefore, resources are spread too thin to comprehensively address the causes of conflict. Moreover, decisions over where to invest funds are often political and short-term oriented. For example, the beneficiary countries of the EDIHR programme are revised and determined every year,<sup>45</sup> while the beneficiaries and the areas of bilateral assistance of the member states for democracy support, which is substantial,<sup>46</sup> are determined on the basis of the foreign policy directions of the individual member states, without much coordination.<sup>47</sup> In its conflict resolution activities, the EU acts in accordance with ‘external constraints and opportunities, rather than strategic design. [...] The EU tends to opt for easier, rather than necessary, foreign policy measures and tends to work around the hard issues of conflict resolution.’<sup>48</sup>

Because of those shortcomings in other external policies, IPA was identified as the only instrument that holistically addresses the causes of conflict. Thus, enlargement policy is the most appropriate for analysis, if one wants to get at least a partial answer to the question of what role civil society development plays, or could play, in the EU’s peacebuilding policy. However, this does not mean that other policies are not worth analysis, but rather that the limitations of this article do not allow for a more detailed analysis of other policies.

It should also be noted that the aim of the analysis is not to assess policies towards individual enlargement countries, since that

would be too overwhelming a task for this work. Instead, the analysis presents more general concepts and activities of the enlargement policy regarding civil society development, the comparison of funds and offers a brief description of activities in each country; assessing such data to answer the fundamental question of the role civil society development plays in the EU's enlargement policy.

#### THE EU'S ENLARGEMENT POLICY AND CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Countries included in the enlargement policy must not endanger the region; however, all have experienced some form of war or instability over the past twenty years. Thus, one of the most important goals of the enlargement policy is to defuse those factors which cannot be achieved without the development of civil society.

As mentioned, the main instrument of the EU for the civil society development in the enlargement countries is IPA. However, IPA is a young instrument, entering force in 2007 to combine previously separate programmes for assistance to current candidate and potential candidate states. Because of that, the following list of past programmes will also be included in the analysis:

- Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS), the programme that channelled funds to Western Balkans enlargement countries from 2002 to 2006;
- The Turkish Pre-Accession Instrument (TPI) that channelled pre-accession funds to Turkey, also from 2002 to 2006;
- The PHARE programme that channelled funds to Croatia from 2005 to 2006 since Croatia became ineligible to CARDS support (except for the regional dimension of CARDS) when it had gained the candidate country status in 2004.

From the contents side, the projects that were conducted from 2002 to 2009, under CARDS, Turkish Pre-Accession instrument, PHARE and IPA, address the civil society development from three different levels.<sup>49</sup> The first level, the organisational level, represents support to CSOs such as: their functioning, development and networking. This support is given through grants for research and technical assistance, and funds for cooperation between various CSOs in a given country, or internationally. Support on the

organisational level is important for all kinds of CSOs; especially those that play the role of “missing link” between the government and the civil society, those who are apolitical and play the role of strengthening the democratic values or are important for the maintenance of the dialogue between parts of the society with an aim to achieve reconciliation.

The second level, which I named the governance level, encompasses support to the CSOs as regards gaining influence on the decision-making process or their operation as regards legal framework. This level does not encompass direct support to CSOs, but rather support (or pressure) in the governmental sector for passing the appropriate legislation for the operation and/or participation of CSOs in the decision-making process, and support for the independence of media, since the media are an important tool for gathering public support and influencing the government and its institutions. Support on this level is mainly aimed at CSOs, whose roles are to influence the decision-making process, however, legal framework for the operation and local support to the CSOs is obviously relevant for all CSOs.

The third level, which I named it the socialization level, is also not aimed directly at the development of CSOs, even though CSOs could be beneficiaries of funds if they cooperate in the socialization process. Instead, support on the socialization level is aimed at enabling as wide a population as possible to become a part of an active civil society, through empowering the individuals of the various weaker parts of the society. Here, the EU conducts projects for the support of different minority groups and former refugees, support to the reforms for the greater respect of human rights, various educational schemes, and support to the office of the ombudsman.

However, it has to be noted that in practice, such clear division is not possible and that many projects are cross-cutting – for example, support to the development of higher educational institutions serves both as empowerment to individuals (by providing better education), and as direct support to CSOs since universities (academe) are by the UN definition also CSOs.

As regards the EU’s activities in the period of 2002-2006, different emphasis was given to the enlargement countries as regards the share of financing for the civil society and education<sup>50</sup> projects (see Info-graph below). For example, in Croatia, one quarter of all funds

under CARDS were aimed towards the development of a civil society, while in Albania, the share was below one tenth, even though Croatia's civil society was much more developed than Albania's in 2002 (see Rankings below). What is more, the aim of projects between countries differed. In Turkey, TPI projects addressed all three above mentioned levels. On the organizational level, various "dialogue" projects between Turkish CSOs and between Turkish and European CSOs were devised, and grant schemes were implemented. On the governance level, projects aimed at improving the performance of the Turkish Department of Associations and legislation that regulate the activities of the CSOs, and at strengthening NGOs as a link between a public sector and the civil society, were implemented. On the socialisation level, support for the implementation of human rights reform in Turkey and to the Office of the Ombudsman was provided.

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In the West Balkan countries, the CARDS programmes for individual countries were not so coherent. In Bosnia, assistance for the reintegration of refugees and the strengthening of the media sector was prioritised. The strengthening of media was also envisaged in the programmes for Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania, while the reintegration of refugees was also a priority in Croatia. Strengthening of CSOs and cooperation between them was envisaged for Albania, Kosovo, Croatia and Macedonia, while the inclusion of CSOs in decision-making processes was supported in Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo and Croatia. Improvement of the legal framework for the operation of the CSOs was a priority in Kosovo and Croatia, while minority protection measures were envisaged in Croatia and Macedonia. However, CARDS regional programme addressed all three levels of activities with a regional dimension and with a budget of €16 million.

Considering education in Turkey, a project for the development of human rights and democracy education was envisaged, while Turkey also participated in Jean Monnet Scholarship Programme (scholarships for post-graduate studies in the EU countries for scholars, civil servants and employees of NGOs), the Lifelong Learning programme (scholarships and facilitation of student exchanges abroad) and Youth in Action Programme (scholarships for voluntary work abroad). In all CARDS country programmes, funds were directed to the improvement of vocational education and training

that included development of school management, teacher training, vocational standards, and curricula. In addition, all CARDS countries participated in the TEMPUS programme to support the modernisation of higher education through partnerships between educational institutions of the project country and educational institutions in the EU countries.

As indicated, after 2007 assistance for enlargement countries is channelled through IPA, which has five different programmes: Funds from Transition assistance and institutional building programme, and Cross-Border Co-operation programme are available to candidates and potential candidate states, while funds from Regional development, Human resources development and Rural development programme are available only to candidate states and are meant to prepare them for the future inclusion in structural and cohesion funds. Since civil society assistance, as well as institution building measures and associated investment, transition and stabilisation measures, are provided under the Transition assistance and institutional building programme, this programme will be the subject of analysis vis-a-vis IPA funds.

The share of funding civil society development under the IPA transition assistance and institutional building programme differs even more substantially as in the 2002-2006 period. In the case of Turkey, for example, the share of those projects represents more than a third of all funding, while in Bosnia, the share is only 3% (see Info-graph below). Regarding the aim and number of projects; all countries (except Albania) envisage activities on all three levels, while in Albania, the only project formed under IPA envisages activities on the organisational level. As regards number of projects in other countries, Turkey is at the forefront with 15 projects, followed by Serbia (11), Bosnia (9), Kosovo (6), Croatia (4), Montenegro and Macedonia (3).<sup>52</sup> Apart from country programmes, civil society is also addressed under the so-called IPA Multi-Beneficiary assistance that supports cross-country projects. Here €46.1 million are earmarked for civil society projects between 2007 and 2009, and those projects address various tasks on all three levels of activities for improving civil society.

On the educational level, all West Balkan countries continue to participate in the TEMPUS programme; however, the programme is now funded by the Multi-Beneficiary assistance and not separately for each country, as was the case with CARDS. €107.6 million are

## Percentage of Civil Society & Educational Projects under CARDS, TPI, and PHARE, 2002/06<sup>1</sup>

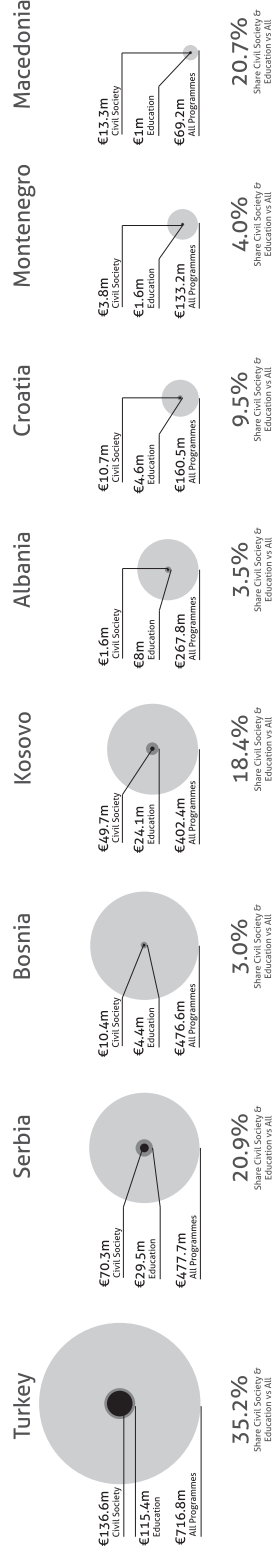


1. For Croatia 2005/06

2. Period 2005/06, for period 2002/04, Kosovo is included under Serbia & Montenegro

Source: Jan Heijmans (2009b), The Concept of Normative Power in World Politics, Danish Institute for International Studies, DIPS Brief, May 2009.

## Percentage of Civil Society & Educational Projects under the IPA, Transition Assistance & Institutional Building Programme, 2007/09



envisaged for educational programmes. In addition to TEMPUS, former CARDS countries are also included in the Youth in Action programme (re: Turkey) and the ERASMUS MUNDUS programme (scholarships for graduate studies abroad). Also, Croatia and Macedonia are included in the Erasmus and Leonardo Da Vinci exchange schemes. The number of projects for improving education under the IPA in the country programmes also differ, e.g. Serbia leads the group with 6 such projects, while there is only one project in Albania and Montenegro.

As observed above, the EU also provides assistance in rebuilding civil society through EIDHR, which is composed of small projects that grant funds to individual CSOs and also various governmental bodies recognised as important for democracy, civil society and human rights development. Statistics are available for the period 2000-2006, where 286 such projects, with the combined value of €40.2 million, were financed in West Balkan countries and Turkey.<sup>53</sup> However during the same time, the share of the EIDHR assistance in the enlargement countries was in constant decline: the countries received 20.4% of the EIDHR budget in 2002, and only 7.3% in 2006, since the tasks of the EIDHR has been taken over by other programmes in the region. According to indicative programme, the enlargement countries received €7.5, €9.25, €11.15, and €12.45 million for the years of 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively.<sup>54</sup>

#### ASSESSMENT OF THE EU'S CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES

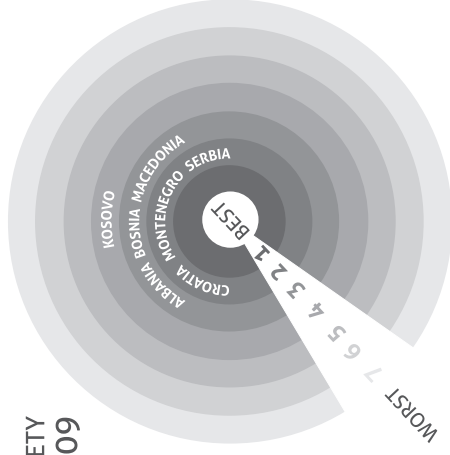
The EC is the main financial supporter for civil society development in the Balkan countries,<sup>55</sup> and officially the Commission recognises the importance of the civil society development in the enlargement process, however, it argues that the '(r)esponsibility for strengthening the role and influence of the civil society in the enlargement countries lies primarily with the countries themselves ... (h)owever, the European Commission is also willing to step up its own support to the civil society development in these countries,<sup>56</sup> highlighting that also in the field of civil society the EU is reluctant to assume responsibility for its policy towards the region.

This reluctance could provide an explanation as to why the EU achieved only limited success in the field of civil society

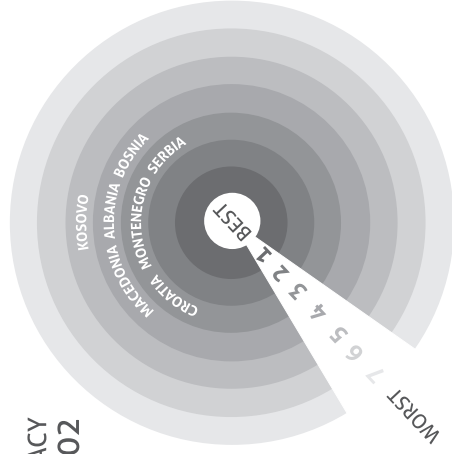
**FREEDOM  
HOUSE  
RANKING  
2002**



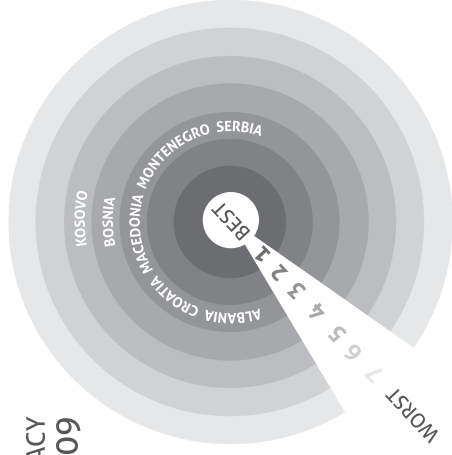
**CIVIL SOCIETY  
2009**



**DEMOCRACY  
2002**



**DEMOCRACY  
2009**





development. In the case of Turkey, the Freedom House's last report (2007)<sup>57</sup> acknowledges some weak improvement in this field. More data is available for Western Balkan countries (see Rankings below). Here some improvement was made in Albania, Bosnia and Macedonia, i.e. countries that had relatively less developed civil society in 2002. Weak improvement is shown in the case of Kosovo while there was no change as regards Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia that had relatively better developed civil society in 2002. This seems to show that the EU is relatively more successful in developing a civil society up to a certain point, but it is still not able to develop it to the levels of 2004 accession countries<sup>58</sup>.

What is perhaps even more interesting to note, is the gap between the civil society and the overall democracy score. The civil society is more developed than other areas that influence the level of democracy in every Western Balkan country. This seems to show a systematic irregularity, i.e. the development of the civil society does not translate itself into the overall improvement of the democracy score; even more, the average gap between the civil society score and the overall democratisation score has slightly widened from 2002 (0.82 point) to 2009 (0.89 point), while the average civil society and democracy rating improved to 0.36 point and 0.28 point, respectively.<sup>59</sup>

What could be the reason for such limited achievements? Firstly, the funds available under the IPA programmes are, compared to the enlargement of 2004 and 2007, clearly less abundant while the tasks are more difficult.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, it seems that the EU does not have a coherent approach towards various areas where change is needed, but instead "picks up" programmes that are either seen as priority, e.g. the case of Albania where help is heavily concentrated on justice and home affairs,<sup>63</sup> or most likely to be successful. However from the viewpoint of peacebuilding, neglecting other important areas or focusing on those that could be relatively easily improved is not prudent. Indeed, it is essential that the EU forms a coherent strategy towards the development of civil society in the region with appropriate amount of funding that would be used to implement a more holistic policy of the civil society development in individual countries. One of the first and relatively easy steps the EU could take is to open the Erasmus and Leonardo Da Vinci's exchange programmes to potential candidate countries since these programmes are perceived as positively effecting the development

of individuals, especially their intercultural skills.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the young are often perceived as the primary target group for civil society development since they are more receptive and have greater capacity to change than older generations.<sup>65</sup>

The other, and perhaps even more important question, is that of the reason for the gap between the development of civil society and the overall democracy score. There could be two reasons for this gap, firstly that public servants, politicians and other relevant actors are not technically (e.g. because of the lack of knowledge or means) able to translate the advocacy of CSOs into policies; and secondly that CSOs, in spite of the EU projects that specifically targeted this area, lack access to the relevant policy makers. The first reason could be addressed through additional investments into various programmes of expert assistance for public servants (such as Twinning). On the other hand, reasons for the lack of access challenge the overall concept of the EU's engagement in the area. The EU is the main driving force of reforms in the area and it pays little attention to the inclusion of local CSOs when it comes to pressing for, and implementing, reforms in enlargement countries. Thus, the process of implementing such reforms is not locally owned since the partners in the process (the EU and CSOs) do not share decision-making powers. Instead, the EU tries to reduce bigger and very sensitive reforms in potential candidate countries to the technical level and purposely overlooks their political dimension,<sup>66</sup> and those technicalities are then drafted by the EU without much involvement of the local civil society. Even though those reforms are often well-drafted as regards the substance, because of the lack of consensus in the society (that could only be achieved through the involvement of the CSOs), those reforms are destined to fail.<sup>67</sup>

So what are the alternatives? Especially in the potential candidate countries, instead of putting the primary focus on adopting the legislation through means of persuasion, the EU should focus on strengthening the participation of CSOs in the process of policy-making, even though that would, at the beginning (at least in perception), slow down the process of EU integration since the focus would shift from exporting the *acquis communautaire*<sup>68</sup> to forming conditions for political ownership of those countries for necessary reforms for improving democratic governance to be undertaken. The EU must be steadfast and speed up the development and

implementation of projects while pressing to develop enhanced access of the CSOs to policy-makers through the improvement of relevant legislation and “penalties” for not implementing such legislation. In that process, the EU should play only the role of a “regulator” and advisor that ensures reforms are in accordance with the commonly accepted principles of human rights, good governance (etc.), instead of drafting them themselves. Only after those reforms are truly implemented, the second phase of fine-tuning to align them with the *acquis* should take place.

Currently, the prospects of enlargement curiously plays an adverse role; the countries of the West Balkans are implementing reforms, prescribed by the EU, with a distant hope of, and as condition for, eventual EU membership, while they are unable to implement such reforms in practice. The EU should constantly reaffirm its commitment to the membership of candidate countries but its *conditio sine qua non* for the membership should be the ability of the candidate states to independently conduct policy-making with the inclusion of all layers of the society while the EU should affirm its commitment and responsibility to help the countries in achieving that goal.

## CONCLUSION

Analysis of the EU’s efforts regarding the development of civil society in the framework of the enlargement policy has shown that conceptual as well as technical improvements need to be made in order to successfully address the democratisation issues of selected countries. I believe that achieving success is essential if the EU wants to justify its role as a norm promoter in the international arena. Furthermore, the EU should try to conduct a holistic peacebuilding process in the framework of other external policies to learn new lessons and thus develop more and better tools for conducting its foreign policy. For example, pilot projects that would holistically address the causes of conflicts and would with that give more importance also to the development of a civil society could be devised in “friendly” countries – countries that are not *per se* opposed to democratic transition but lack the means for following it through.

Concerning enlargement, some credit should be given to the EU for its achievements in the area of the civil society development; however, if the EU does not address the technical and conceptual

issues, highlighted in the analysis, it risks the undermining of its status as a norm promoter.

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#### NOTES TO PAGES 91-108

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  - 17 Manners (2009b), p. 3.
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  - 20 Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite (2006), *European Union Peacebuilding and Policing*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 2.

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