

# CITIZENS FOR CHANGE

JANUARY-MARCH 2026 // CIVICAMOBILITAS.MK

MAGAZINE NR.24



Photo: „Medusa“ platform





## OLD-NEW CHALLENGES OF THE CIVIL SECTOR

The draft Law on Associations and Foundations, i.e. comments and proposals related to it have resulted in a number of debates in the civil sector at the beginning of the year. This was understandable if one takes into consideration that it concerns a basic law for functioning of CSOs. The submitted around 130 comments very clearly show the interest in how the work of the CSOs will be regulated and if the new law would expand or narrow the space for work of the civil sector. Mostly commented are the articles of the draft law that concern the economic activities and cofinancing of projects by international donor. We have not seen the new text of the draft law yet, and according to the announcements that it would be sent for review by the Venice Commission, there are ample chances that we will finish the year as it is.

Parallely to this debate, the financing of the CSOs has remained a chronic theme. The UNDP colleagues have presented a research according to which the public funds for CSOs had almost quadrupled in six years, but that there was a structural problem behind this figure. According to the research, more than 37 percent of the national funding in 2024 was distributed without a public call and without a transparent procedure. At local level, sports absorb up to 95 percent of the funds, leaving a marginal budget for the organizations working with the youth, women, environment and social justice.

Apart from these two topics, dedicated to the environment in which CSOs function, the new issue of "Citizens for Change" newsletter also covers the work of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, as well as the new interactive platform of BCSDN which makes the regional data of the civil sector more accessible.

*We thank:* Unit for Cooperation with NGOs at the General Secretariat of the Government, United National Development Programme (UNDP), EU Council, Civil Society Resource Centre (CSRC), "Women" organization from Delchevo, "Societas Civilis" Institute for Democracy (IDSCS), "On Bike" Civil Initiative, Initiative for Women's Rights from Shuto Orizari, Center for Civic Communications (CCC), Platform for Fight against Corruption, Macedonian Association of Young Lawyers (MYLA), RESIS Institute for Research of Social Development, Romalitico Institute for Research and Policy Analysis, HERA – Health Education and Research Association, Institute for Communication Studies (ICS), "Marko Mileski" Scout Brigade Kichevo, "Dose of Happiness" Day Care Centre, IMPETUS Centre for Internet, Development and Good Governance, the Association of Journalists (AJM), "Medusa" for their support and access to information when preparing the articles for this issue.

*Photo archives:* Civica Mobilitas, Civil Society Resource Centre, "Medusa", CCC, AJM, MYLA, "On Bike", Romalitico, IDSCS, "Dose of Happiness", "Mirko Mileski" Scout Brigade, HERA, RESIS, MIA, ICS, BCSDN, Unit for Cooperation with NGOs, Ministry of Justice.

When it comes to the topics related to civil participation, the new issue follows the CSO advocacy efforts related to free health care of Roma women and their children, the capacities of the Public Traffic Enterprise, the functionality and accessibility of the public space for all, the work of the Agency for Free Access to Information, as well as the energy transition which is a deep social transformation.

With civic activism, the organizations have addressed more issues related to the rights of women and girls, environment, personal data protection, inclusion of people with disabilities, etc.

The new issue of "Citizens for Change" follows these processes, documents them and believes that informed civil sector is the best corrective of the political decisions.

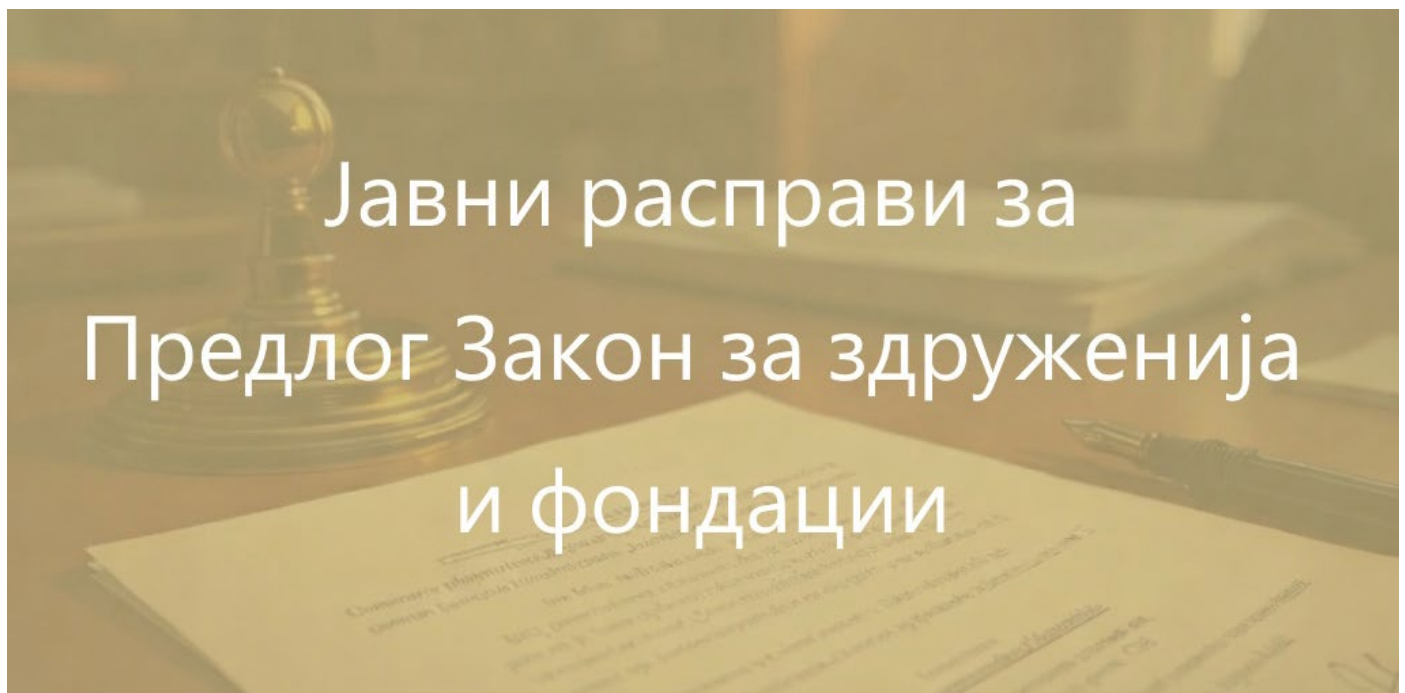
Have a nice reading!

Gonce Jakovleska  
Civica Mobilitas  
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THEME  
**ENABLING  
ENVIRONMENT**

# Economic Activities and Co-financing – the Most Disputable Articles of the New Law on Associations and Foundations



Ministry of Justice held a series of public debates on the draft Law on Associations and Foundations in Bitola, Gostivar, Shtip and Skopje in February this year. The debates were organized with the support of the project “Technical Support for Improving the Enabling Environment of the Civil Society Organizations in the Republic of North Macedonia”, funded by the EU and they were open for all interested parties, and the comments coming from the debates were reviewed along with the written remarks submitted via the Electronic National Register (ENER). The result of the public debated and ENER was more than 130 comments of the draft law. This is a closure of a phase in the preparation of the draft law which started in August 2025 with more intensive meetings of the working group.

Article 56 on economic activities is by far the most discussed one because of the proposed approach in the draft law which requires that the economic activities are listed in the organization’s statute. The Platform of CSOs Fighting against Corruption asks that “the law regulates this area following the current legal frame”, while Konekt warns that this approach can cause an “unfair competition at the market, as well as abuse in obtaining financial benefit by using a lower tax rate”.

There were also many comments to Article 78 on co-financing projects of international donors. The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) assesses that the draft law “creates a normative gap which cannot be constitutionally filled in with a Government decree”, because it does not directly appoint the body in charge of distribution of funds. The Balkan Network for Civil Society Development (BCSDN) gave the example of Montenegro, where “at least 0.5% of the current state budget is allocated for NGOs”, including 0.1% for project co-financing, as a model worth reviewing.

There was also a discussion on Article 83 regarding the conditions for participation at public calls, which stipulates that the organization “in the last two years should have an implemented project with at least the same value” as the one that it applies for. The Council for Cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society, MCIC and the Platform of CSOs for Fight against Corruption ask for a complete deletion of this condition, with an argument that the capacity should be assessed as a “criterion in the evaluation procedure rather than a previous condition for eligibility”.

MCIC has submitted **21 proposals** for changes and additions, which concern 14 articles of the draft law. Part of the proposals concern the legitimate work of the bodies of CSOs, economic activities, responsibility of members, procedures for distribution of public funds, evaluation criteria, role and composition of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society.

The Working Group of the Ministry of Justice has reviewed the received comments before preparing the final version of the draft. A number of participants in the debate insisted that the draft law should be “submitted to the Venice Commission for their opinion” before Government adoption and submitted for review and adoption by the Parliament.

If one takes into consideration that the practice of Venice Commission in reviewing laws in between two and four months, the initial expectations of CSOs to have a new law by June will not materialize.

# Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Put in the Focus the Legal Changes, State Financing and Quality of Consultations

In the first three months of 2026, the Council for Cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society held three sessions where the members reviewed legal proposals, reports and programmes important for the work of the CSOs. The sessions in January, February and March were chaired by the President of the Council Nikica Kusinikova.

In January, the Council members discussed about the draft Law on Associations and Foundations and asked that an opinion is prepared with specific proposals for improvements in the legal text. The Council has also reviewed the documents for financing the associations and foundations for 2026, and the members expressed their concern regarding the decreased financial support compared to 2025 and they recommended that in the future the funds are not less than the current 20 million denars. At the February session, the Council reviewed the draft report on its work in 2025 and assessed that it should be expanded with more information on the effects and achieved goals. The members gave their recommendations also on the annual report on the implementation of the Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society, especially in the part on financing and the need for a more transparent mechanisms for state support to organizations.

Special attention was paid to the consultations with CSOs when preparing laws and strategies. The Council asked that the institutions provide a more essential dialogue with the organizations after the completion of the ENER consultations, to release clearer information on the re-



ceived proposals and the reasons why part of them have not been accepted.

In March, the members unilaterally adopted the Work Report of the Council for 2025. They also reviewed the draft Law on Social Enterprises and asked the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs at the General Secretariat to prepare an opinion with the main remarks of the discussion. At the session, the members also spoke about the plans of the ministries on financial support to CSOs in 2026 and asked that there is a tabular overview with data from all ministries.

With these sessions, the members of the Council have worked on improving the legal framework, monitoring the state funding, improving the consultations and bigger accountability of the institutions to CSOs.

## What Is the State of Affairs with the Financing of CSOs in Macedonia

The financing of the civil sector in Macedonia has almost quadrupled in six years. The system of financing CSOs in the country is based on laws, by-laws, codes and strategic documents that define the legal basis, institutional competences, budget mechanisms and procedures for distribution of public funds. Nevertheless, “despite the developed framework, the implementation remains uneven, and the procedures and criteria have not been sufficiently approximated between the institutions and municipalities”, thinks the author Borche Trenovski.

The finds of the “Analysis of the Regulatory Framework and Existing Mechanisms for Financing of CSOs at National and Local Level” were presented to representatives of institutions and CSOs on 17th March 2026 in Skopje. The workshop was organized as part of the **Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans**, financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP.

One of the key findings of the analysis shows that the total public financing of CSOs has increased from 419 million denars in 2018 to almost two billion in 2024, i.e. an increase of almost four times. Behind this figure, there is a structural problem. More than 37 percent of the national financing in 2024 was distributed without a public call, without a transparent procedure, without criteria available to the public and without equal chances for all organizations. It is even more concerning that the part of the funds that are distributed without a call has grown: in 2022 and 2023 it was around 32 percent, and in 2024 it increased to 37.64%.

When it comes to “financing of CSOs”, in the budget document there is a mix of sport clubs, political parties and religious communities, entities with quite different roles in the society. In order to have a clearer picture, the analysis has included the data of Civica Mobilitas platform, which follows the allocations to the organizations registered according to the Law on Associations and Foundations, excluding sport and other categories.

The comparison of the two sources for the period of 2019-2023 reveals the depth of the problem: in 2023, the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society recorded more than 1.34 billion denars for funding of CSOs, while the data of Civica Mobilitas for the same year show only 332 million denars. The difference of more than one billion denars is not a mistake, but rather a direct consequence of the fact that the same budget line covers quite different users. While the two sources are quite harmonized when it comes to the ministries of environment and political system, the biggest differences are with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Agency for Youth and Sports. When the difference between the sources is so big, the real image of where the money goes to is practically illegible.

At local level, the situation is even more striking. According to the data of the analysis, in Aerodrom, Centar, Shtip and Kavadarci the sport absorbs between 75 and 95 percent of all funds intended for CSOs, leaving marginal budget for the organizations that work on the rights of women, youth, environment and social justice. In Kavadarci, the associations and foundations in four subsequent years, from 2018 to 2021 did not receive anything. The only exception is Berovo, where the organizations regularly receive 46 percent of the budget intended for CSOs. A small municipality with a limited budget, but with a balanced distribution and proof that change is possible when there is a will.

## More Accessible Data on Civil Society in the Region

The Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) published a new **interactive platform** (dashboard) with the data from the Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development.

In this way, the data of this research which is implemented in six countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) have become more accessible for analysis, comparison and practical use. It has transformed the Monitoring Matrix from a static report into a dynamic digital tool, made into a data visualization tool (Power BI).

The users, be it researchers and policy creators or CSOs, can have an insight into specific areas such as freedom of association, state funding or inclusion in policy creation in a much faster and simpler way.

The interactive tool presents at one place the data on the legal, regulatory and financial environment in which the civil society in the region functions. It provides descriptive reports and enables that the data are searchable, comparable and visual.

The platform enables filtering per states, years, areas, subareas and standards, in order for the users to find the data that they need more easily and compare the trends through time.

For the civil sector, this interactive tool is important because it provides better understanding of the long-term trends, comparison among the countries and timely rec-

The analysis is a key step in identifying the possibilities for improvement and it is based on the five basic principles of LOD methodology: transparency, inclusiveness, efficiency, continuity and universality. It has already been tested in the five municipalities covered by ReLOaD programme (Aerodrom, Berovo, Centar, Shtip, Kavadarci) and Berovo representatives state that it has helped them in improving transparency and structure of financing.

CSOs that work with vulnerable categories, young people and advocacy face problems when financing is unpredictable. It makes their work more difficult, when it comes to planning and keeping the employees.

The analysis offers 11 recommendations, such as: introducing a national minimal standard for financing CSOs applicable to all ministries, obligatory public call with strictly limited exceptions, reform of the budget classification, national digital portal on transparency and gradual multi-year support. Still, there is the question if the institutions will have the will to implement them.

ognition of the areas where reforms are needed. For the institutions and donors, it is a data source that can help in creation of policies and support directed to the real needs of the civil society.

The Monitoring Matrix shows that the data, apart from being a technical tool, are also the basis for informed advocacy, public dialogue and monitoring of whether the laws, policies and practices really create space in which the CSOs can freely, sustainably and effectively work.

Apart from the researching framework, the Matrix is also a tool for active advocacy. It helps the organizations to substantiate their demands, institutions to recognize their weaknesses, and the public to obtain a clearer picture of how enabling the environment is in which the civil society works.

At the moment, the data on the six countries from 2019 to 2024 are included. The Matrix monitors the conditions for the work of CSOs via three key areas: basic legal guarantees of freedoms, framework for financial sustainability of CSOs and the relationship between the government and the civil sector.

## Youth Centre Open in Delchevo



In January, the Municipality of Delchevo opened the Youth Centre where the young people obtained a new space for activism, networking and participation in the local social life. The Centre was promoted at the first meeting of the new composition of the Local Youth Council, which officially opened the doors to the young people in the municipality.

The opening of the Centre is a response to the demands of the young people, who defined it as a priority for 2026 at budget forums. In this way, the importance of the civic participation in local policy creation and services has been confirmed.

The Youth Centre is envisaged as an open and inclusive space accessible to all young people, where they could be included in trainings, workshops, cultural and creative activities, as well as in initiatives of interest for the community. The space aims to stimulate their activity, cooperation and inclusion in the social life.

The Centre will be managed by “WOMAN” CSO from Delchevo, which will work on supporting the young people and their development with various programmes and activities.

The opening of the Youth Centre was an obligation of the Municipality of Delchevo according to the Law on Youth Participation.

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION

### In Skopje There Are only 157 of the 341 JSP “Skopje” Buses Riding in Skopje Daily

The Center for Civic Communications published the [research](#) и [database](#) on the capacities of the Public Transport Enterprise Skopje, The research reveals concerning figures.

Only 157 buses per day are in the traffic, out of the 341 that the Public Transport Enterprise Skopje has.

The data show a significant decrease of the public transport in the capital. In ten years, the number of transported passenger has decreased for about 30 million per year – out of 52 million passengers in 2015 to around 22 million today.

As they say at CCC, “the situation is the worst when it comes to the buses that are in order”. According to the research, out of 341 buses, 185 are technically in order, but 157 are included in the daily transport.

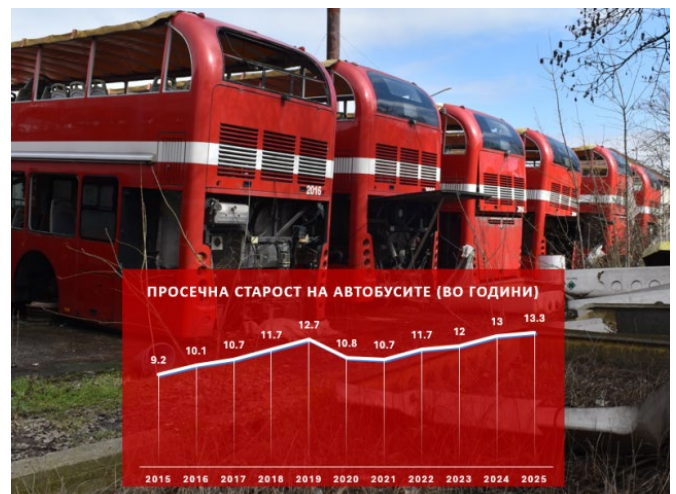
At the same time, the average age of the vehicles grows, which is not 13.3 years and it is the highest in the last ten years. More than 80 percent of the buses are “Yutong” and “LAZ”, which the enterprise also has ten “Sanos” buses, which are 33 years old.

With respect to the environmental standards, only around

10 percent of the vehicles meet the Euro 6 standard, while the other vehicles are Euro 4 and Euro 5.

The research was made based on the annual reports of JSP “Skopje” and data obtained with the free access to information of public character.

The whole research can be accessed via the following [link](#).



# “On Bike” Looks for Best Solutions for All Citizens of Skopje



While there are intensive rehabilitations of streets, sidewalks and other road infrastructure going on in Skopje, the civic initiative “On Bike” appeals to the public with a message that the rehabilitation of the city has to mean a real improvement for everybody, rather than creating obstacles in the public space.

With letters to the City of Skopje and the Ministry of Transport, the initiative which has been advocating for years for better cycling and more accessible Skopje opens two important issues: how the current rehabilitation is done in the field and why the adoption of the Rulebook for Cycling Infrastructure is late.

The reason for their reaction to the City of Skopje is the state of affairs with “Nikola Parapunov” street in Karposh IV, where during the rehabilitation of the pedestrian zone, started in February 2026, new kerbs were placed with an angle, instead of drop kerbs.

According to “On Bike”, this is an example how a good intention to improve the infrastructure can turn into a new obstacle for part of the citizens, unless the already established accessibility standards are respected. They remind that the sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are not used by pedestrians only, but also by people with disabilities, users of wheelchairs, parents with baby strollers, senior citizens, as well as everybody who moves on bikes, scooters or other devices on wheels.

They stress that “any other shape is a physical obstacle and makes the movement more difficult”, and they also stress that “one high kerb is like an abyss, an uncrossable obstacle for the people in wheelchairs”. With this, “On Bike” wants

to show that what seems to be a small infrastructural detail in practice can mean a complete exclusion from the public space for somebody. For them, the question is not if there is a marked bike path somewhere, but if the public space is made in such a way that it will be functional and accessible for all. “On Bike” does not dwell on criticism only, but they also offer specific solutions. They propose that the kerbs are corrected while there are construction activities, including those at several locations around the city, such as “Partizanski odredi” and “Ilinden” boulevards, as well as “Makedonija”.

“11th October”, “Kocho Racin” streets and other parts where there are construction works. The message is that mistakes must not be fixed only where the citizens react loudly, but that the rules must apply everywhere. According to them, it is not enough for good rules to be on paper only, if they are not communicated and respected by everybody involved in the process of designing, implementation and supervision.

Apart from this, “On Bike” has also opened the issue of the delay of the Rulebook on Planning, Design and Maintenance of Cycling Infrastructure. Although the initiatives for its adoption have existed for more than one decade, and there have been legal conditions created with the changes of 2025, the process has not been completed yet. Therefore, they ask that the institutions should give a clear response on where the procedure for its adoption has been blocked.

In their address to the Ministry, they do not hide their disappointment with the long wait, but at the same time they continue to offer cooperation. “We think that there has been sufficient time and it would be a shame that a Rulebook that is of public interest should remain stuck in drawers”, they state.

Additionally, they indicate that Macedonia, together with Albania and Kosovo is among the last countries in Europe which do not have such regulations, and that the adoption of the Rulebook would be a big step forward, especially if one takes into consideration that, according to them, the prepared document would be one of more quality ones in the region. “On Bike” does not act as a critic of institutions, but as an active civic actor which has monitored, analysed, proposed and reacted for years. They state that “there cannot be both progress and status quo at the same time”.



# Roma Women and Babies Continue to Face Serious Barriers in Their Access to Free and Quality Health Care



The workshop, organized by the Initiative for Women's Rights from Shuto Orizari in February gathered the representatives of the institutions, health care workers and CSOs for a discussion on the accessibility and quality of health services for the Roma community.

At the meeting, findings of the field research were presented, showing that the free gynaecological services are still charged, which is an additional burden for the women, especially for those from the vulnerable groups. Apart from this, the health of the women in the reproductive period and the health of the babies are directly impacted by the insufficient level of information about their rights, the administrative obstacles and limited access to free services.

The participants in the discussion were representatives

of the Ministry of Health, Health Insurance Fund, Medical Chamber of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, as well as family doctors and civil sector representatives.

They stressed the need for bigger inclusion of the CSOs in the creation of health care policies, prevention and sanctioning of the illegal charges by the gynaecologists via increased inspection monitoring and clear mechanisms for reporting, as well as better information for the citizens when it comes to their rights. There was special stress on the transparency in spending of funds and strengthening the cooperation between the institutions and the community.

The workshop showed that promotion of health rights cannot be achieved without active participation of the citizens themselves, as well as CSOs which become a crucial factor in creation of fairer and more accessible public services in these processes.

The activity is part of the project "Improved Health Rights of Girls, Women and Vulnerable Groups", supported by the Swiss Government with Civica Mobilitas programme, implemented by HERA – Health Education and Research Association, ESE – Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women, Stronger Together and the Initiative for Women's Rights from Shuto Orizari.

## Platform for Fight against Corruption Asks for Urgent Appointment of Leadership in the Agency for Free Access to Information

In January, the Platform of CSOs for Fight against Corruption appealed to the MPs in the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia to urgently appoint a director and deputy director of the Agency for Protection of the Right for Free Access to Information of Public Character.

At the Platform they say that the Agency has a key role in protecting the right of the citizens to access information of public character. It is not functional since the mandate of the previous leadership has expired, and no new people have been appointed by the Parliament.

They remind that the right to access to information is constitutionally guaranteed human right and it is regulated with international and European conventions, while its fulfilment is the basis for the transparency and accountability of the institutions. In their reaction, they state that the access to information of public character enables the citizens to be informed about their rights and obligations, use public services, participate in the process of decision

making and ask for responsibility from the institutions. It is stressed that this right is an important tool for CSOs, media and investigating journalists in their fight against corruption and revealing irregularities in the work of the public institutions.

Because of not having an appointed director and deputy director, the Agency cannot decide upon appeals of information seekers, nor to fully perform its legal competencies; in this way, as it is stated, the access of the citizens to information concerning the work of the institutions and spending of public funds. The Platform has called upon the MPs to urgently appoint leadership, in order to provide unhindered work of the Agency, as well as continuous protection of the right of the citizens for access to information of public character.

# Energy Transition Brings Challenges, but Also Specific Measures for the Citizens



The energy transition in the Republic of North Macedonia is no longer a matter of choice, but of necessity. As “Societas Civilis” Institute for Democracy Skopje (IDSCS) states, this process is part of the broader reform agenda and it is closely related to European obligations and climate goals of the country. Nevertheless, despite the declarative dedication, the question if existing policies are clear enough, coordinated and implementable is open.

In practice, transition means gradual abandoning of coal, which still has a central role in the production of electricity. IDSCS analyses show that this dependency puts the state in a complex position: to provide energy stability, which decreasing the emissions at the same time. However, the key shortcoming is that the timeframe for leaving coal remains unclear, which created uncertainty both for the investors and the public.

The solutions, according to IDSCS, are in line with accelerated investment in renewable sources, especially solar and wind energy. The reform agenda stipulates increase of these capacities of at least 0.8GW by June 2027, which is an ambitious step forward.

Still, as IDSCS indicates the implementation of these plans faces serious administrative barriers, complex, long and often unadjusted procedures for obtaining permits, which slow down the development of projects. In this direction, the announcement of the institutions in charge about introducing an Annual Plan for Construction of Energy Facilities with the new law on energy can be a step forward, but it remains to be seen if it will also mean a significant acceleration of the processes.

Parallely, there is a plan to place 250 photovoltaic systems on roofs with a total installed power of 250 MW by 2030. These systems would first of all be used for own needs or for storing of energy, which shows a gradual transition to a more decentralised and more sustainable energy model. Still, there is a question if there are sufficient financial and technical mechanisms to stimulate this transformation in practice.

An especially sensitive issue is the social dimension of the transition. As IDSCS stresses, the concept of “just transition” is recognised, but still insufficiently developed in the specific policies. It is planned that by the end of 2027, around 300 employees of REK Bitola and 50 at TEC Oslomej will undergo a requalification process, through which most of them would be able to find new jobs. Although this is a significant step, the question if these measures are enough in a long run remains open, especially taking into consideration the risk of energy poverty and the need to create new economic possibilities in the affected regions.

Additionally, the reforms imply specific obligations at local level. By June 2027, all municipalities and the City of Skopje should introduce energy efficient street lighting, which can contribute to significant decrease of the expenditures. In the housing sector, it is planned to have obligatory introduction of calorimeters in the new buildings connected to central heating, in order to have fairer and more precise measuring of the heating energy. However, as IDSCS analyses show, these measures often encounter challenges in their implementation, especially at local level, where the administrative and financial capacities are limited.

In the end, as it can be concluded from IDSCS analyses, the energy transition is not only a technical process, but also a deep social transformation. However, without clear deadlines, persistent implementation and real constitutional preparedness, there is a risk that the ambitious plans remain insufficiently implemented. Therefore, the key challenge is not in setting the goals, but in translating them into specific and measurable results.

**The report** has been prepared by “Societas Civilis” Institute for Democracy Skopje (IDSCS) within the project “Strengthening the Participation of Citizens and Businesses in the Berlin Process and Reform Agenda of North Macedonia”, financed by the Open Society Foundation – Western Balkans. The views and opinions are only of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Open Society Foundation – Western Balkans.

## Eighth of March Women's Rights March in Skopje



Hundreds of citizens marched through the centre of Skopje on the occasion of the International Women's Day. On 8th March, at 12:00 hrs, the traditional Eight of March walk started from "Woman Fighter" park in the Centre of Skopje, organised by the civic initiative "Who Is Next" and several CSOs. This year, the walk took place under the motto "So There Is no Other. We Will not Be Gone", a slogan that carries both sorrow and determination.

The march started with a one-minute silence in honour of women victims. This year, it took place in the eve of the first anniversary of the Kochani tragedy, but also only several days after the public was shaken by another tragedy. At a period when domestic violence has become more frequent and when there are almost daily tragic cases where women are victims.

Previously, in their call for the march, the "Who Is Next" initiative said: "We had enough suffering, let us put an end to harassment and killing of the people, especially women. Let us ALL go out together to the 8th March walk, side by side with our sisters, mothers, daughters, girlfriends, friends, with the women whom we know and whom we don't know. Together, we will fight to a more just, humane and caring world and destroy this system of greed and violence."

Skopje marched. Hundreds of women and men expressed their anger with the place of women in modern society. The participants marched in honour of all fallen and brave women who had dedicated their lives to this struggle, to all women who did not receive justice in the past year, for all of those who were supposed to be rescued and for all of those who could not or were not allowed to join the march. Kalia Dimitrova, the founder and editor in chief of Meduza spoke at the march, sending three direct messages to the institutions, men and women.

She told the institutions and the Prime Minister that violence is not an accidental deviation, but a systemic product of education, culture and public discourse. "Today, Macedonia is a creepy, aggressive, frustrated environment which actively, consciously and systematically creates a culture of violence and it is on a quest to kill its women", said Dimitrova, warning that without urgent changes in education and political culture, institutions will directly bear the responsibility.

She told the men that indifference is also an attitude. "When we tell you that we do not feel safe, and your first response is that not all men are violent, you practically tell us that you are indifferent to our lives", she stressed, calling them to simply talk among themselves instead of symbolic gestures. She appealed to women to keep their friendships and their relations to their close ones alive, because "relations and friendships between women save lives". She especially called the women politicians and MPs to make this issue an urgent political priority.

With banners and powerful messages, the participants asked for justice for the many victims and hope for better tomorrow. With the 8th March walk, the organisers call the citizens to join and together send a message that the women will continue to fight for equality, safety and dignity.

In honour of all women who fought for women's rights and dignity, in honour of all women who still fight, the march ended at the place where the statue of Vera Jockic was (not stolen) as a sign of protection against deletion of women from history and society.

# Experts Are Preparing the First National Guide for Protection of Reproductive Health

In the Republic of North Macedonia there are less and less children born, and more and more people face infertility problems. With a fertility rate of around 1.5 children per woman, which is significantly under the 2.1 level necessary for natural renewal of the population, the country faces serious demographic challenges.

Despite this, prevention of infertility remains rarely open in time. This is the reason for the start of the process of preparation of the first National Guideline for Preserving the Fertility of Women and Men, which aims to move the focus from treatment to prevention and timely protection of the reproductive health.

The initiative is implemented by HERA – Health Education and Research Association and MGO – Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, by establishing a multidisciplinary expert group.

The group includes 10 experts from various areas, such as gynaecologists-obstetricians from the University Clinic of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, a psychiatrist from the University Clinic of Psychiatry, a gynaecologist, family medicine specialist, urologist, nutritionist, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Health.

The purpose of the multidisciplinary approach is that the risk factors for infertility are reviewed from more aspects, thus providing clear directions for the health care workers and citizens. The guide should contribute to better health care education and information on the factors that influence the reproductive health and its protection.

Some of the expected results are early recognition of risks, strengthening the role of the primary health care, better information of the young people by comprehensive sexual education and bigger accessibility of recommendations for general population and health care workers.

This initiative establishes a systemic approach to fertility protection, stressing the prevention, information and early action, instead of solely dealing with problems that have already occurred.

HERA and MAGO indicate that this approach opens a new avenue in the public health, where fertility is treated as a resource that is protected in time via continuous care and education.



# Marking the Day of Non-Governmental Organizations with Trainings, Debates and Youth Activities

On the occasion of the International NGO Day, on 27th February, the Civil Society Resource Centre organised four parallel events in various cities around the country, uniting CSOs, young people, activists and local government representatives around a common goal – strengthening the civil society and its role in encouraging social changes.

In Skopje, there was a training on the topic of “Developing Project Concepts Following the Logical Framework Approach”, directed to strengthening the capacities of CSOs on creating sustainable and well-structured project concepts. The participants worked on analysing problems and goals, selecting strategies, as well as developing a logical framework, connecting the project ideas with broader social changes. With practical work and discussions, they also reviewed the risks and assumptions in the implementation. Part of the participants stressed the value of the obtained knowledge and the possibilities for their practi-

cal implementation, as well as the networking with other organizations.

In Shtip, there was an information day under the motto “Get Involved, Make a Change!”, with the participation of around 60 children and young people. With interactive sessions, they got acquainted with the role of CSOs, possibilities for volunteering and activism, as well as the process of making initiatives. By simulating the work of an organization, the young people proposed solutions for specific community challenges, opening discussions on topics such as education, safety and influence of modern technology.

In Gostivar there was a public debate on the role of the CSOs in the community development, with the participation of long-term activists from the region. The discussion covered a review of the development of the civil sector, achieved results and current challenges. The people pres-



ent stressed that there was a need for a bigger support for CSOs, especially at local level, and proposed initiatives for improving cooperation, including the intersectoral platform, financial support and local advocacy coalitions.

The activities continued in Demir Hisar, with a visit to the Mobile Resource Centre. The meeting included representatives of local CSOs, municipal administration, as well as young activists and volunteers. They were informed about the possibilities for financing, mentorship support and services offered by the project “EU Support to Civil Society Resource Centre – Phase 2”, stressing the importance of cooperation and joint action at local level. With these activities, the Civil Society Resource Centre confirmed its role in capacity strengthening, networking and support to CSOs and young people. The participants stressed the importance of strong and active civil society which recognizes

the community needs and contributes to improving the quality of life.

The project “EU Support for the Civil Society Resource Centre – Phase 2” is financed by the European Union, and it is implemented by the Foundation Civil Society Resource Centre, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, the Association for Democratic Initiatives – Gostivar and Media Plys – Shtip.

## World Day of Scouts Celebrated in Kichevo

With a solemn vow of the youngest members and strong message of humanity and togetherness, the World Scout Day was marked in Kichevo; it is traditionally celebrated on 22nd February in honour of the founder of the scout movement Robert Baden-Powel.

Around 400 scouts of more brigades from the country participated in the event. The central event started at the city square in Kichevo, where the youngest members solemnly gave their scout vow and officially joined the organization.

The people of “Mirko Mileski” scout brigade from Kichevo, who were the hosts of the event, say that this moment had a special symbolism for the new generations of scouts.

“Our brigade was the host of the event where the youngest members of several brigades gave their vows and officially became scouts. Part of the event was also the blood drive helped by the Red Cross, where more than 20 units of blood were collected. We create a better world together”, says their announcement.

Following the solemn part, the programme continued at Kitino Kale with open air activities, adjusted to different age groups, in the spirit of the scout motto “Be Prepared” and the principle “Make a Good Deed”.

The scouts also visited the Museum of the National-Liberation Fight in Kichevo, where they got acquainted with the local history and the events that marked the region.

The event has confirmed the role of the scout movement as space for youth learning, humanity and active participation in the community.



## Young and Experienced Journalists Will Work Together on Local Stories

Activating the young people, who will work together with experienced journalists on stories about local issues and challenges was one of the topics of the editorial meeting of the journalists and activists of “Local Active East”, together with representatives of RESIS Institute and the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia (CMEM). The cooperation aims to bringing in new energy in local journalism, by parallelly involving the youth potential and the current experience of journalists and activists.

The project coordinator Igor Micevski stated that announced that within the project “Community Media for Stronger Civil Society” implemented by RESIS Institute for Research of Social Development and the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia – CMEM, with the support of the Swiss Government via “Civica Mobilitas” programme will open new possibilities for production of contents and involvement of young journalists.

He stressed that the project will put special focus on involving young people in the editorial boards of “Local Active”, which will contribute to development of their journalistic skills and promotion of local journalism as a whole. “The sustainability of community media and specifically of Local Active initiative does not solely depend on the amount and diversification of the funds for content production and advocacy. The human capital development is of crucial importance – especially those of the young people who want and can be included in journalistic research, while natural-



ly using new tools to reach their audience and create a new one”, said Micevski.

The journalists and activists shared views that the mix of youth and experience can contribute to further development of community media, as well as to increased visibility of problems that the citizens face. At the meeting, there were also discussions on the effects of the stories published so far on “Local Active East”, by sharing new ideas on stories that will be developed in the coming period.

## Young People Learn How to Protect Personal Data in the Digital World

On the occasion of the Day of Personal Data Protection on 28th January, IMPETUS – Centre for Internet, Development and Good Governance, in cooperation with the Agency for Personal Data Protection and “Nikola Karev” high school in Skopje organised an event in the premises of the school.

At the event, there was video material promoted, prepared by the students in order to increase the awareness of the young people on the importance of privacy and personal data protection in the daily lives, at the same time also as an example how they can actively contribute to promotion of responsibility and on-line safety.

In cooperation with the Bureau for Education Development, there were discussions on key topics with the students, such as: right to privacy, internet safety, proper use of social networks and rights and obligations when sharing personal data.

There were discussions on how, thanks to smartphones, buying cards in shops, sharing biometric data with health and fitness applications, even publishing on social media, more and more information on our lives can be found on the internet.

Although this mutual connection expands the possibilities, it also exposes us to significant risks, such as violation of data safety, identity theft and monitoring.

The students were encouraged to critically think about which data they share, with whom, for what purpose and how they can control them and manage their use.

The Day of Personal Data Protection is marked every year in honour of the Convention 108 of the Council of Europe, adopted in Strasbourg in 1981, as the first legally binding international agreement for personal data protection. The Convention has set the foundations of the modern framework for data protection, including a General Regulation on Data Protection.

“May this day be a reminder that privacy protection is a joint responsibility of the institutions, educational system, citizens, especially young generations”, say the people at IMPETUS. The event was organised within the project MK-SafeNet.

## Local Community and Institutions in Prespa Looking for Joint Solutions for Waste Management

Involvement of local community is crucial when it comes to creating sustainable solutions for waste management, as it was stressed at the workshops that took place in March in Prespa, where citizens of Resen and surrounding villages discussed jointly and proposed ideas for cleaner environment.

At the two workshops with the local population and farmers there were around forty citizens of Bolno, Carev Dvor, Drmeni, Shurlenci, Perovo (upper and lower), as well as of Resen. At the meetings they discussed with “Proleter” public communal enterprise director, Marchel Konsentino Rusu, on the current challenges in waste management and possible joint steps to improve the situation.

During the discussions there was an action plan prepared on the implementation of the already adopted recommendations and demands of the citizens. Among them are providing second bins for waste selection in the villages (plastic, paper and cans), allocating special places for collection of textile waste, as well as establishing a model for collection and management of pesticide waste, which will be developed in cooperation with the agricultural pharmacies.

The discussions take place within the campaign “Prespa? Wake Up for Clean Environment”, implemented by the Institute for Communication Studies (ICS) in cooperation with Eco Guerilla Prespa and the Macedonian Ecological Society, with the support of the European Union via “EU for Prespa” programme.



## Romalitico and the Chamber for Private Security with an Agreement for Training and Licencing of 56 Roma

Elvis Shakiri, the Director of Romalitico Institute for Research and Policy Analyses signed a cooperation agreement with Verica Mileska Stefanovska, the President of the Chamber of Private Security of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The agreement stipulates implementation of training for 56 Roma on obtaining qualifications for physical security. The programme covers theoretical and practical lessons, followed by a theoretical and practical exam. After the successful completion of the training and passed exams, the participants will be licenced according to relevant procedures and work standards in the private security sector.

Romalitico has already signed an MoU with private security agencies, providing connection between the training and labour market. These partnerships provide that the participants, after receiving the licence have secured possibilities for employment in private companies in the sector.

The organization remains dedicated to creating specific possibilities for economic empowerment and better access to dignified employment for the Roma community, via practical measures, professional trainings and partner-

ships with relevant institutions and private sector.

This activity is implemented as part of the intervention “Labour Market Access Through Skill Strengthening and Job Matching”, financially supported by Sweden via We Effect, Skopje.



# Building Inclusive and Resilient Communities by Strengthening the Local and Institutional Capacities



With the project “Building Inclusive and Resilient Communities”, the Macedonian Association of Young Lawyers (MYLA) implemented a series of workshops intended for prevention of violent extremism, strengthening the multidisciplinary cooperation and promoting the post-penal treatment and reintegration of convicted persons.

The activities were intended for local self-government representatives, expert services in the area of social, health and children care, education, as well as multidisciplinary teams and representatives of penal and correctional institutions and local communities.

In the municipalities of Shuto Orizari, Veles and Centar there were workshops focused on the role of the local institutions in the prevention and response to violent extremism. The discussions covered the national framework and relevant policies, recognition of early signs of radicaliza-

tion, as well as mechanisms for coordination, monitoring and reporting of risky occurrences.

There was special stress on strengthening the cooperation between the institutions and community, in order to have a more efficient and timely reaction at local level, as well as bigger resilience of the communities.

In Veles, there was a two-day workshop with multidisciplinary teams of KPU Idrizovo, KPU Kumanovo, as well as Skopje, Gostivar and Kumanovo. The participants worked on developing tools for working with people at risk of radicalization, preparation of pre-release programmes, preparation of standard operational procedures for post-penal support and exchange of experience via case studies.

The workshop aimed to improve the coordination between the penal-correctional institutions and local teams, in order to have a more effective reintegration and decrease of risk for re-radicalisation, especially with vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The project is implemented with the support of the Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience (GCERF) and aims to contribute to systemic and coordinated approach in dealing with risks from violent extremism, by strengthening institutional capacities and active community role.

## Bigger Inclusion and Support to People with Down Syndrome

In North Macedonia there is no official national register that precisely determined the number of people with Down Syndrome, because of which there is no single precise figure at national level.

According to world statistics, Down Syndrome appears at one in 650 to 700 newborns, while the assessments of the associations and health care institutions show that there are that around 800 to 1,000 people with Down Syndrome living in the country.

They are one of the smallest, but also most vulnerable groups of people with disabilities, for whom the country gradually builds an inclusion system, although in the practice there are still challenges in education, social protection and their full social inclusion.

On the occasion of 21st March – International Day of People with Down Syndrome, the Association for Rehabilitation and Inclusion of People with Down Syndrome – “Dose of Happiness” Day Care Centre Skopje sent a message for respect of the human dignity, equality and promotion of inclusion.

The association stresses that the people with Down Syndrome are an inseparable part of the society and they should have an equal access to education, health and social care, cultural and sport life, as well as possibilities for employment and active participation in the community.

“As an organization that works with children, young people and people with disability on daily basis, as well as with their families, we remain firmly determined in our mission to create space for development, support, acceptance and real inclusion”, say the people at “Dose of Happiness” Day Care Centre.

They add that inclusion must not remain a declarative issue only, but it has to turn into real practice which will be recognised in the institutions, schools, working environment and daily lives. At the same time, the call to remove barriers and prejudices, bigger social visibility and systemic support to the people with disabilities and their families.

Prior to the day, the representatives of this association had a meeting with the President Gordana Siljanovska Davkova. In her post after the meeting, she said: “In the support



of the parents and caretaking families, for me it is important to enable the people with Down Syndrome an adequate development of their life skills and abilities for active participation in all segments of the social life, as equal citizens”.

At the Day Care Centre, they say that the society should move to essential equality and acceptance, underlying the message “different in something, equal in values”, as a call for a more inclusive and more humane community.

## Eight Decades of Journalism in Service of Public Interest



By granting the annual journalism awards, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) marked its 80th anniversary, eight decades dedicated to protection of the journalistic profession, freedom of expression and public interest. The awards were granted by a commission made by the journalists Milka Smilevska, Semra Musai and Marjan Nikolovski, who valued he work according to criteria such as professionalism, public interest and impact.

The life achievement award was given to the journalist Risto Tasev, and the photo journalist Robert Atanasovski was awarded for his contribution in the visual documenting of contemporary history. The investigation journalism award “Jashar Erebara” was given to three editorial boards and authors for their researches connected with Kochani fire and the consequences of the tragedy: IRL, KOD – TV Telma and the journalist Irena Mulachka from “Fokus”. The recognition for local and regional reporting was given to Ardit Ramadani from Portalb, while Vlado Apostolov from BIRN won the recognition for contribution to investigative journalism for the projects “System outside the System: Country Blind for the Money of MPC-OA and IVZ” and “Religious Properties”. There was an award also for Aneta Blazhevska from “Nezavisen.mk”.

For the winners, the awards are a stimulation for further work in the interest of the public. In his address, the AJM President Mladen Chadikovski spoke about the development of the Macedonian journalism and the challenges it faces today. According to him, from government media beginnings to modern digital surrounding, journalism has

constantly changed, but it has remained under pressure. “From the first issues of Nova Makedonija and Večer via the Macedonian Radio as an important medium of an era, up to Macedonian Television, journalism has developed together with the state, with all of its crossroads, weaknesses and hopes”, said Chadikovski.

He added that the current challenges are different and not always visible, because of economic dependence and media that barely survive, via SLAPP law suits and algorithms that award sensation, up to cyber-attacks, on-line labelling, insults and threats.

“The battle today is not less difficult, only different”, said Chadikovski, stressing that AJM will continue to defend professional standards, to stand behind journalists and protect public interest.

At the celebration there was also an exhibition of photographs by cameramen and photo journalists which show their professionalism, courage and dedication, as part of their contribution to documenting the social events. AJM congratulated all winners and expressed gratitude to the journalists and editorial boards, who, as they pointed out, contribute to promoting the professional standards and transparency in the public.



NEWS  
**FROM CIVICA  
MOBILITAS**

## Will Macedonia Finally Know Where Its Scholarship Users Are?



Every year, Macedonia loses a young people potential of one small town. Only in Slovenia, in the last several years, there have been on average around 1,000 Macedonian students. While the best minds of our high schools conquer the classrooms in Vienna, Berlin, Ljubljana or Amsterdam, the country has been facing an institutional gap for years: there has been no precise answer on how many scholarship users we have abroad, where they are and what they do after they graduate?

This administrative “black hole” for decades meant lost contact with part of the most valuable capital that we have – the human one. The state has invested millions of Euros in scholarships (covering up to USD 40,000 per scholarship only); however, without a monitoring system, this money has often turned into a one-way ticket for leaving the country. The students felt invisible for their own system, and the domestic economy has remained deprived of the expertise that it paid for.

It was this “painful spot” that was the motive to start the project “Advocacy for Inclusive Development”, which, with the support of the Swiss Government via Civica Mobilitas programme started to essentially change the reality. The project is implemented by three partner organizations: Forum for Reasonable Policies (FRP), Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje (ISSH-S) and the Balkan Institute for Regional Cooperation (BIRC).

[Read the complete story.](#)

## Thematic Forum on the Use of Beneficial Ownership Data in the Fight Against Corruption



Within just two months, 3,000 companies that won tenders disclosed their beneficial owners on the electronic public procurement system.

More than 30 representatives of key public institutions, civil society organizations, media, and international organizations today discussed opportunities and methods for using data from the Register of Beneficial Owners of Legal Entities as a tool in the fight against corruption.

The Swiss Ambassador to the country, H.E. Christoph Sommer, highlighted examples of detecting and recovering significant assets obtained through illegal

financing, precisely through international exchange of beneficial ownership data. He also emphasized the particular role of civil society organizations and investigative journalists in uncovering corruption, and the importance of ensuring they have timely and sufficient data on beneficial owners. Ambassador Sommer also spoke about the significance of beneficial ownership data for supporting a fair and open market.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister for Good Governance, Arben Fetaj, transparency of beneficial ownership data is not merely a regulatory requirement, but a cornerstone of ethical governance and fair competition. He called on all stakeholders to collaborate on improving data quality, interoperability between institutions such as the Central Registry, the Financial Intelligence Office, the Public Procurement Bureau, and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), as well as strengthening verification processes to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this data.

[Read the complete news.](#)

# World Cancer Day: Only 10 Percent of Women Covered by Cervical Cancer Screening

Although cervical cancer is one of the few malignant diseases that can be almost completely prevented, around 200 women in North Macedonia are diagnosed every year, and between 40 and 60 women lose their lives to this disease. It is alarming that in 2024, only about 10% of the target group of women were covered by the organized screening program, far below the minimum threshold needed for effective prevention.

On the occasion of February 4 – World Cancer Day, which this year is marked under the motto “United in Our Uniqueness,” we emphasize the need for the healthcare system to place people and their real needs at the center of healthcare, with a special focus on women and vulnerable groups.

Analyses and field experience show that preventive healthcare is not a priority in health policies. The budget for preventive programs has stagnated for years and does not keep pace with rising costs and inflation – in 2025 it amounted to 672.5 million denars, and 677 million denars are planned for 2026. At the same time, only 23 million denars per year are allocated for screening for malignant diseases, a sum that has remained unchanged for years and is meant to cover four different types of cancer.

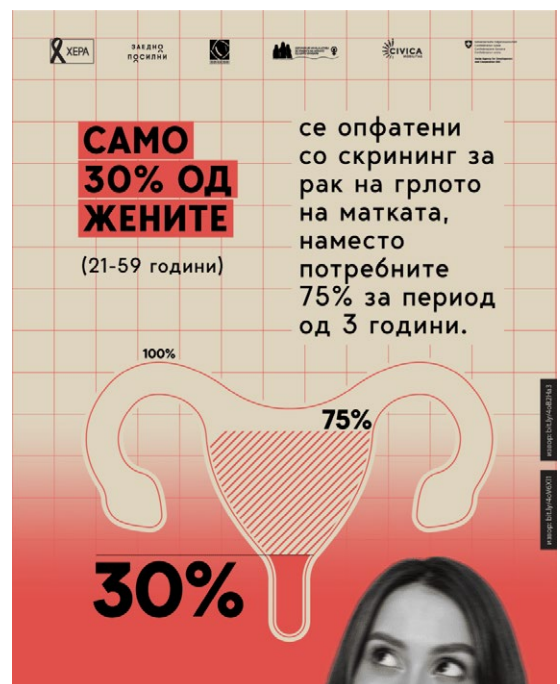
The situation with cervical cancer screening is particularly concerning. The program, introduced back in 2012, has only 11 million denars per year at its disposal, which does not allow for adequate coverage or quality. The lack of gynecologists in around 40 municipalities, the limited operation of the mobile gynecological clinic, and administrative barriers further hinder women’s access to timely prevention.

While many European Union countries are approaching the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem, in our country this disease continues to claim lives that could be saved. Effective and adequately funded screening, together with high coverage of HPV vaccination among girls and boys, are key measures to prevent these devastating statistics.

Therefore, we call on the Government and the Ministry of Health to urgently increase financial support for cervical cancer screening to at least 35 million denars per year, ensure better access to gynecological services, strengthen HPV vaccination, and invest in continuous and comprehensive health education campaigns.

Prevention saves lives. Investing in early detection is not a cost, but an investment – in the health of women and vulnerable groups, and in the sustainability of the entire healthcare system.

The work in the field of improving cervical cancer screening has been carried out within the framework of the project “Improved Health Rights of Girls, Women, and Vulnerable Groups.” The project is implemented by the partner organizations HERA – Association for Health Education and Research, Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE, Association for the Support of People Living with HIV – Together Stronger, and the Women’s Rights Initiative Association from Shutka, with the support of the Government of Switzerland through Civica Mobilitas.



## CSOs Discussed on How Better to Promote Their Achievements

The communications and visibility of Civica Mobilitas and CSOs were a topic of the workshop that was held on 11th February 2026 in the venue of Civil Society Resource Centre.

21 representatives of 20 CSOs, current recipients of partnership grants (CM-PG-2) discussed their communication challenges and how to follow the rules for successful reporting on their achievements in an easier way.

The workshop was open by Darko Dimov, coordinator of the programme, who reminded the grantees about their contract obligations, stressing communication and visibility as an important segment for them and their work. There was an official congratulation to the new grantees and first meeting with them by Kristina Kolozova, National Project Officer at the Swiss Embassy. She spoke about the contribution of Civica Mobilitas for the civil society, stressing that this group of grantees is the last Civica Mobilitas generation.

Civica Mobilitas communication and information team, made of Gonce Jakovleska, Boris Ristovski and Karolina Gjurkovska took care of the last and most important part of the workshop.

The grantees were acquainted with the rules and regulations on the placement of logos, the use of hashtags and mentions on Civica Mobilitas and Swiss Embassy profiles, which will be their guidelines when reporting on the implemented project activities and events. The social

media, such as Civica Mobilitas FB profile and FB group were also mentioned as a possibility to achieve bigger visibility and even bigger audience.

The team presented the resources available to the grantees, such as Civica Mobilitas e-platform which offers many options for supporting the communication efforts of the grantees. The lecturers encouraged the participants to actively use all options offered by the platform, such as news on CSOs, the CSO Address Book, "Citizens for Change" newsletter etc.

The participants agreed that one of the most important adjustments that should be made is putting focus on reporting about the achievements, as opposed to information on the activities. The most important issue is to learn how to report on the changes that CSOs create in the society on daily basis via civic engagement.

Civica Mobilitas will continue to support the grantees in alleviating the communication process and promoting the achievements in the best and most appropriate way so that they reach their target groups.

[Read the complete news.](#)

## Public Interest before Hidden Ownership



Around the world, the existence of the so-called "shell" or empty companies has been known for quite some time; without a known owner and without employees they have transferred huge amounts of money for fictional services among themselves, in order to hide the trace of this money which most often came from illegal and untaxed businesses. However, after the discoveries of "Panama", "Paradise" and "Pandora" papers, which revealed that hundreds of people in public offices have abused their position for the benefit of companies which they or people close to them own and control secretly, it has become clear that it has to be known who is really behind the companies.

It was the crucial moment when the world agreed that they should know not only who has been registered as a manager or owner of the companies, but who is really being them, who controls them and has benefits from them. That is how the real owners were found.

Many countries have established registers of real owners of companies – i.e. people who, in final instance, own or control the company or its property and funds, or who have material benefits from the property/funds of this company.

However, this is not the end. Besides the initial idea – to prevent hiding the company ownership, making illegal profits and financing terrorism – revealing real owners in the companies has also become a tool to prevent tax evasion, abuse in public procurement, concessions and other public funds, financing political parties and campaigns, etc.

[Read the complete story.](#)

## Social justice is not celebrated, it is created!



The Day of Social Justice is not a date to be marked merely in a formal sense. It should remind us that justice is not an abstract concept, but a concrete reality that directly affects people's lives — their wages, security, dignity, and future.

For us at „Glasen Tekstilec,“ social justice is not a declaration, it is an everyday struggle. It is in the phone calls from workers who lost their jobs overnight. It is in the unpaid wages of hundreds of workers when an employer decides to shut down the company and leave the country. It is in fixed-term contracts renewed year after year with no security. It is in people's fear of reporting injustice because they are afraid of losing their livelihoods.

In a society like ours, where economic insecurity is high and institutional protection is often slow and far from guaranteed, social justice becomes a matter of survival. Workers' rights are not a luxury. They are the foundation of a life lived with dignity.

Over the past years, „Glasen Tekstilec“ has worked directly with workers, most often women, who face precarious forms of employment, abuse of fixed-term contracts, non-renewal of contracts due to pregnancy or sick leave for an ill child, several months of unpaid wages, or workplace mobbing.

Through free legal assistance, counseling, and public advocacy, we try to restore balance where it has been disrupted. But each individual case is only a symptom of a broader problem, a system that too easily allows vulnerable groups to be left without protection and justice.

Social justice means a system that functions. It means institutions that respond not only under pressure, but by law and conscience. It means policies that take into account the real needs of citizens, not just statistics.

[Read the complete news,](#)

## The Swiss Ambassador Sommer Visited Kochani and Civic Initiatives



More than ten parents and family members affected by the tragedy at the Kochani discotheque met the Swiss Ambassador in the country, H.E. Christoph Sommer. At the meeting with their association – “16th March 2025” CSO there were representatives of the Swiss Embassy and Civica Mobilitas team.

On the same day, 23rd February 2026, the Ambassador met Support Kocani, a current grantee of Civica Mobilitas.

The discussions were open and honest, focusing on the current situation, challenges and needs of the affected families and civic initiatives.

The parents presented their work so far, shared the challenges that they face, as well as their specific requests and the need for justice.

They also talked about the accident that took place at the New Year's party at the bar in Crans-Montana in Switzerland and the connections between the two tragedies. The parents stressed that although they had not established direct contact with the families in Switzerland, the pain that they have creates a strong, humane connection with everybody who had been through similar loss.

They proposed establishing of contact via social network groups, and they also stated that they were prepared to visit the parents in Switzerland in the spring, in order to share their support and solidarity.

[Read the complete news.](#)

## Meeting with the Head of Eastern and Southern Africa Division at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation



On 5th March, Civica Mobilitas team met Séverine Donnet-Descartes, the Head of Eastern and Southern Africa Division at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

She was interested in the challenges of the civil society, as well as about the possibilities that the programme offers to CSOs in the country.

Aleksandar Krzhalovski, the Programme Team Leader and Director of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) spoke about the development of Civica Mobilitas, the biggest programme for civil society support in the country, funded by the Swiss Government in the last almost two decades. Speaking about the context and the environment in which CSOs function, Krzhalovski presented the Civil Society Index data, which are part of

the CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation global methodology, which has been implemented by MCIC since 2006. The Swiss guest was also interested in the data of measuring the trust in the civil society, as an indicator of the perception about the role and influence of the civil sector and organizations in the society. One of the main topics of the discussion was state funding for CSOs, not only as an issue of financial support, but also as a need to establish a transparent system that will enable building trust between CSOs and institutions at central and local level. In this context, there were discussions on how much from the state budget is intended for the civil society, and which percentage of the total revenue of CSOs comes from these funds.

One of the topics for discussion was also the process of capitalization, which should cover the results achieved in the almost 20-year long programme implementation. With this process, there will be a broader analysis of the achievements, taking into consideration the context in which the activities have taken place, as well as their connection to the key social events in the country.

[Read the complete news.](#)

## We Just Need a Chance!

“Every second friend of mine is already in Germany. I still doubt, I want to stay, but I don’t see any perspective”, says Arben, a 24-year old programmer from Tetovo, who faces the same question every day: if he should stay or leave. Most of his peers have already made the decision.

His story is not an isolated case. It shows the reality of thousands of young people from the Polog region who think about leaving every day. Behind the statistics there are human stories, hopes, disappointments and families who see their children off abroad.

According to the research The Situation and Reasons for the Migration of the Young People from the Polog Region, conducted in November 2024, as part of the project Youth Empowerment: Stimulating Civic Engagement and Entrepreneurship in the Polog Region, half of the young people in Polog (50.4%) think that leaving mostly happens immediately after the completion of secondary education. The responses came from 500 young people aged 15 to 29, surveyed via social media, high schools and faculties in Polog.

The main motives are clear: better living standard (80%) and better employment possibilities (78%). It is interesting that as many as 87.10% of the surveyed who emigrate are not members of political parties. This clearly indicates the fatigue of partization with the young people and the lack of trust in the political parties.

Unfortunately, the system sometimes discourages the young people, rather than supporting them, such as in the case of Ana, a 23-year old graduated economist who dreams of opening a marketing agency. When she made the first steps towards implementing this idea, she encountered obstacles.

“I have ideas and energy, but when I come to the municipality, I am lost in paper and bureaucracy. I feel as if I am told: ‘You’re not welcome’”, says she.

These voices confirm the reality, the young people do not leave because they want, but because they feel that they do not have a choice.

[Read the complete story.](#)



**Civic Society Organizations  
Adress Book**



**Civil Society Organizations  
Resources**



**Magazine  
„Citizens for Change“**



**News from the Civil Society  
Organizations**



**Stories from the Civil Society**



**Civic Impulse**



**Code od Conduct for Civil  
Society Organization**



**State funding for Civil Society  
Organizations**



**Civica Mobilitas  
Community**



**Civica Mobilitas  
ePlatform**

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**Citizens for Change is published by Civica Mobilitas, financially supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by NIRAS from Denmark, Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) and FCG from Sweden**

The articles published in this magazine express view of authors and/or organizations that contribute to the magazine and not those of the Swiss Embassy/Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation or that of the implementing partners MCIC, NIRAS and FCG..

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