

CITIZENS FOR CHANGE

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WHEN EFFORTS LAST - RESULTS ARRIVE

More than three years. That is how long it took for a demand for a basic right – paid maternity leave for women farmers – to develop from a public campaign, via a parliamentary debate, to a full verdict that determined that there was discrimination and obliged the government to change the Law on Health Insurance. And the procedure is on-going.

Civica Mobilitas “entered” this story in 2023, when it supported Coalition MARGINI “Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalised Communities” and its partners in their activities for advocating for paid maternity leave and leave due to sickness or injury, intended for more than 14,000 women registered as individual farmers. With public events, policy analyses, campaign and communication with the MPs, the organization has significantly raised the awareness about the problem. There was a draft-law submitted for changes to the Law on Health Insurance, and all MPs voted in favour of the need for its adoption. The documentary campaign “Fireflies of Hardship”, in which the women farmers themselves told about their everyday struggle made the problem visible for the public and the European Commission which added it to the progress report for the country.

Still, the progress stopped before the very specific change – the law was not adopted. The success was partial: awareness was increased, and the political will was expressed; yet, the right remained unrecognized.

Civica Mobilitas continued to support the organizations in their fight for resolving this problem. With the project of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and its partners new attempts were made. The Organi-

zation and the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination (CPRD) submitted a public interest lawsuit before the Basic Civil Court in Skopje, against the Government and the Ministry of Health. The Court reached a verdict in which it found indirect, intersectional and continued discrimination against individual women farmers and obliged the authorities to initiate changes to the Law on Health Insurance.

This example once again confirms the need for a longer-term support to CSOs, stressing that longer-term support is more important than the short-term interventions, especially when it comes to advocacy, awareness raising or capacity building. Changes in policies and social views rarely come from a single project – they demand endurance, continuity and trust between the donor and the organization, between the organization and its target groups. The support of the Swiss Government via Civica Mobilitas enables this continuity, in this case, to walk the path from campaign, advocacy to a court process. These examples make the role of CSOs clearer to the public, as well as their contribution to the changes in the society.

In this issue of “Citizens for Change” you can also see other achievements of CSOs, without exception connected to the needs of the citizens.

Have a pleasant reading!

Gonce Jakovleska

Civica Mobilitas

National Coordinator for ICO

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THEME
**CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT**

Free Check-ups on the Occasion of World Health Day



On the occasion of the World Health Day, which was marked this year under the motto “Together for Health, Stand behind Science”, HERA – Health Education and Research Association, in partnership with the Municipality of Centar organized free preventive check-ups and health consultations for the citizens on 6th April.

At the event, the citizens could have their blood pressure measured for free, as well as the level of glucose in their blood and obtain advice and consultation with a gynaecologist, orthopaedic, dermatologist and infectologist. At HERA they say that these initiatives, together with the Municipality of Centar directly contribute to bigger accessibility of preventive services and encourage the citizens to have a more active care of their health.

At the organization, they underline that this year's motto stresses the need for health policies to be based on proofs, but also that these proofs should grow into specific, accessible and just services for all citizens, which also means bigger investments in prevention, better geographical distribution of health care services, as well as a system that addresses inequalities.

Although prevention is a key segment of the health care system, the analyses of the CSOs show that the access to these services remains seriously limited. According to the

findings referred to by HERA, as many as 80% of the women have paid for gynaecological services that should have been free, while only around 15% of the women have been covered by cervical cancer screening in a period of three years, instead of the needed 75%. It is also concerning that 92% of the Roma women are not informed that they have the right to a free of charge gynaecological check-up. At the same time, as they indicate from the organization, the access to HIV testing via CSOs has shown to be significantly more efficient: one positive case at each 150 tests, as opposed to one to each 1,150 in the health care institutions.

Although there are preventive programmes, their implementation in practice remains limited due to insufficient funding, poor availability and insufficient information, which especially affects the vulnerable groups and women from rural environments, as they warn in HERA. Therefore, they add that prevention must not be a temporary activity, but rather a continuous and accessible service for all, because only via a timely care, information and equal access to health care services one can decrease health risks and provide better life quality.

Completed Second Educational Camp of the Macedonian Ecological Society in Dojran

In the period of 16th – 18th May, the Macedonian Ecological Society held the second edition of the educational camp in Dojran, which is part of the project “Protection and Revitalization of Mediterranean Humid Zones” – PROZHUM. The camp united 33 high school students, part of whom also participated in the first edition, and almost half of them participated for the first time.

For three days, the Dojran Lake was an open-air classroom for the participants. They counted and identified water birds, researched amphibians and reptiles, studied plant diversity and via laboratory and microscopic analysis

processed algae samples, also upgrading their knowledge via educational games.

“Young people are very interested in the environment when this knowledge is given via experiences that are close to them. At such a camp they learn how to work as a team, they become curious and they start to see nature with different eyes, not only as an environment, but as a space with essential values”, stressed Svetlana Pejovikj, programme manager for ecological education in the organization.

Dojran was selected because of the variety of habitats, rich plant and animal world and the status of a Ramsare area of international significance, proclaimed at national level as a monument of nature. "This is a real open-air lab, where they can come across important species, such as pelicans, and the region is also special due to its historical connections between man and nature, such as the traditional cormorant fishing", said Danka Uzunova, project coordinator and ornithologist in the organization.

The camp showed once again that the young people have a best understanding of nature by direct research and joint learning, which builds a more responsible attitude towards the space that surrounds them. The project is funded by the French Development Agency.



Citizens and Organizations Marked the Europe Day with a Mountaineering March and Forestry



On the occasion of the Europe Day, citizens, institutions and organizations in Macedonia participated in a series of events dedicated to European togetherness and solidarity.

On 2nd May, in front of the Europe House in Skopje, there was the traditional mountain climbing of Vodno, organized by the European Movement, which announced the forthcoming Europe Day. At the event there were representatives of the European Movement, EU Delegation, experienced mountaineers, but also many citizens, led by their joint wish for bigger European togetherness. During

the climb, the participants exchanged the Macedonian and European flag, a gesture with which they wanted to send a message that confidence and partnership are not built in offices, but rather via shared experience and joint determination.

At the European Movement, they stress that the mountaineering values actually coincide with the European ones: solidarity, mutual support and preparedness to always support the one next to you. This, according to the organisers, was the main message of the march, that the road upwards is safer when it is taken together.

Marking of the Europe Day also continued outside Skopje. On 12th May, in Veles, under the slogan "Our Europe – We Grow Together!" there was an action for forestry above the Veles lake of "Mladost" in the region of "Bela Voda", where there were 2,500 seedlings of ash and maple trees planted. The event was organized by the European Delegation in the country and the Europe House Veles network, which provided the seedlings in cooperation with "Macedonian Forests" public enterprise, "Babuna" forest economy.

The ecological action involved more than 150 students, young people and representatives of organizations, among which the team of the Association of People with Cerebral Palsy and Other Disabilities (ZLCP) from Veles, who contributed to a greener future of the city together with the other participants.

Civic Network for Clean Air in the Southwest Region

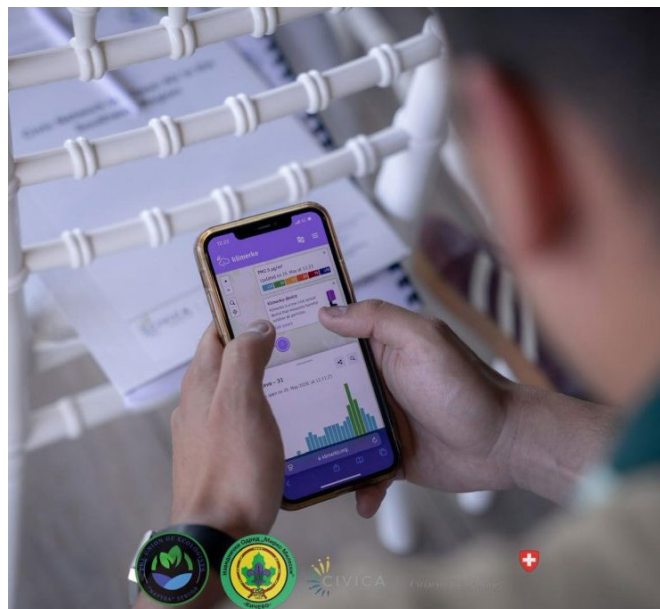
The Association of Ecologists "Natyra" – Struga, in partnership with "Mirko Mileski" – Kichevo scout brigade, started setting up air quality monitoring instruments in the municipalities of Struga, Ohrid, Vevchani, Debar and Kichevo, which is one of the activities in the project "Civic Network for Clean Air in the Southwest Region", supported by the Swiss government via Civica Mobilitas.

Modern instruments are set near schools, kindergartens,

hospitals and public institutions, as well as in the central parts of the cities and they will provide continuous monitoring and open access to data in real time. The goal is to increase transparency and public information on air pollution, but also to raise the awareness with the citizens on environment and public health protection. Via the on-line platform www.klimerko.org, the inhabitants of the region will be able to monitor the parameters of the air quality in their municipalities.

In Struga, within the project, the organisers also held the first training in clean air. The event was opened by the project coordinator Bardhyl Tushi, who presented the goals of the project; he was followed by the university professor Musah Fejzulov, engaged as an expert for the preparation of the educational manual, presented and implemented the interactive tasks with the students. The training was also attended by Besa Tateshi, Sector Head at the Ministry of Environment and Spatial planning, who supported the importance of engaging the young people in the environment protection.

The project is a step towards creating a civil network for air monitoring, involving the community, institutions and citizens in environment protection and creation of better clean air policies.



Red Cross Ohrid with Various Activities on the Occasion of the World Day of the Red Cross

Under the motto “Humanity Unites”, Red Cross Ohrid marked 8th May, the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, established in honour of the birthday of the founder of the movement, Henry Dunant. The celebrations also continued throughout the whole Week of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in the period of 8th to 15th May.

At the holiday itself, a delegation of Red Cross Ohrid and “Henry Dunant” association from Struga, together with representatives of the Municipality of Ohrid and volunteers of the Club of Young People and the programme for care for the elderly, put fresh flowers in front of the bust of Henry Dunant at the seat of the organization. On the same day, there was also an info day for the children of kindergartens and the primary school students from Ohrid and Debrca, who were acquainted with the mission of the movement and the possibilities for volunteering via promotional materials.

During the week, the Red Cross Ohrid organised several information sessions for various target groups, directed to raising the awareness on humanity, solidarity and volunteering. Among those, there was a visit of the children from “Jasna Risteska” public kindergarten, who heard the story about the establishment of the movement on 11th May and met volunteers from “Find Time” group for care for the elderly.

The organization also implemented humanitarian activities at public places, with a special stress on the contribution of the young volunteers in the community, and in 5th May, in cooperation with the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, there was a successful blood drive. Within the events, the Red Cross Ohrid, supported by the Canadian organization Canadians For Children at Health Risk (CCHR) from Toronto, also prepared and distributed humanitarian packages with food products and hygiene means for families at social risks in Ohrid and Debrca.



Training of Women Journalists and Activists on Gender Sensitive Reporting

Within the project “Gender Sensitive Journalism for Local Media Pluralism (REM)”, Info Centre NGO started a series of five on-line educational sessions on gender equality and gender sensitive, ethical journalism. There are five teams participating at the sessions, made by one woman journalist and one woman civic activist, who used case studies,

group discussions and practical exercises to upgrade their knowledge on gender stereotypes, gender-based violence, gender disinformation and using gender sensitive language in the public sphere.

The first two sessions, held on 21st May, were led by the

lawyer and gender equality expert Neda Chalovska, focusing on gender based and digitally based gender violence, as well as the existing protection mechanisms. The next two sessions, held on 27th May, were dedicated to gender sensitive reporting and reporting on gender-based violence, and they were led by the journalist and gender equality expert Ognjen Janeski.

The project comes at a period when, according to the organisers, more and more often anti-gender narratives are spread, presenting gender equality as a threat for the traditional values, especially at local level, where the limited access to checked information and weaker media capacities create a fertile ground for polarised interpretations of gender issues. The situation has additionally deteriorated by the fact that with many local and regional media in North Macedonia, the editorial policies related to gender equality and safety often remain at declarative level.

The goal of the project is increasing the professional capacity of local and regional media on better access to information and promotion of media pluralism by gender sensitive and responsible journalism.

The project “Gender Sensitive Journalism for Local Media Pluralism (REM)” is implemented by the Info Centre NGO, with the support of MeDIA-Lit project, implemented by the Centre for Civic Education from Montenegro (CCE/CGO),

in partnership with the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in North Macedonia, the Tirana Centre for Journalistic Excellence in Albania and the Atlantic Initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Ministry for Regional and Investment Development and Cooperation with NGOs of the Montenegro government.



Women Activism Brings Changes to Rural Areas

The humanitarian association “Mother” from Kumanovo held the third regional networking meeting of the project “Active Women” on 25th April.

At the meeting, there were women activists from the rural areas of Kumanovo, Kriva Palanka and Kratovo, representatives of local institutions, CSOs and partner organizations. The goal was to present the achieved results, share the field experiences and open a dialogue on challenges and possibilities for further participation of women in local decision making.

At the panel discussion “Women’s Activism in Action”, the participants shared specific examples on the project impact on their personal development and the development of their communities. One of the speakers used the obtained knowledge and skills to apply and obtain a grant for advancing her own business, a step towards her economic empowerment and independence. Other participants spoke about the changes in their communities, stressing that the process was not easy, but it resulted in specific and visible results, such as placement of containers in one of the communities, as a result of advocacy activities intended for improvement of the public hygiene and living conditions.

“In the beginning we had no support from the community, there were prejudices towards women and lack of belief that something would be done, but there is really progress”, shared one of the activists, indicating the gradual change of views and increased participation of women in local processes.

The participants also stressed that organised women’s activism contributed to a bigger representation of women in local decision making; within a community, they managed to initiate an election of a local community in whose structures they also involved two women.

The meeting confirmed the importance of women’s networking, solidarity and joint advocacy as mechanisms for improving the position of women from rural areas.

From 2024 to 2026, the project “Active Women” covered more than 200 women from eight communities in the three municipalities, who upgraded their knowledge in advocacy, local participation and economic empowerment. The results of their engagement are 58 initiatives, united in 16 formal requests submitted to the local self-governments, and part of the participants were also given direct support to engage at the labour market and starting their own business.

The project is implemented by the humanitarian association “Mother” Kumanovo, in partnership with SPEKTAR Regional Centre for Cooperation, the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development – Kratovo and the Foundation for Small and Medium Enterprise Development – Kumanovo, with the support of the Swiss government via Civica Mobilitas.

Public Debate on the Importance of Women's Participation in Local Policy Creation



In Demir Kapija, there was a public debate on the importance of the participation of women in decision making processes and local policy creation. At the event there were representatives of the local self-government of Demir Kapija, Rosoman and Gradsko, members of the committees for equal opportunities of women and men in the three municipalities, as well as women representatives of the local women's councils of 11 local communities, which in the past period actively worked on identifying the needs and priorities of their communities.

Via an open dialogue, the initiatives on public advocacy of the women in rural areas were presented, as well as the possibilities for promoting the consultative practices in local self-governments, with a special stress on the need of regular, transparent and two-way communication between the local authorities and the women of the communities.

Among the shared experiences there were successful initiatives for introduction of subsidized local transport, provision of children's playground accessories by collecting signatures of the population, but also resolving the issue of a children's kindergarten in one of the villages. The participants spoke about the barriers that they still face, including stereotypes that prevent some women from expressing their opinion or participating in the meetings of the local communities.

There were several conclusions resulting from the meeting, such as: need to improve the field communication between the institutions and population, introduction of mechanisms for civil participation that will be equally accessible to all, and bigger involvement of women in the local communities where they decide on resolving local problems.

The participants agreed that women are an important mover of positive changes in the local communities, and that their active participation in planning and deciding contributes to more quality and more inclusive local policies.

the activity is part of the project "Women Take over Leadership in Local Communities", which is implemented by the women's organization "Women's Lobby" – Demir Kapija, in partnership with Kvinna till Kvinna foundation, Akcija Združenska from Skopje and the humanitarian association "Mother" from Kumanovo. The project is funded by the European Union and the Swedish Embassy.

Civic Engagement, Culture and Art

In June, Stela network held the second mentorship circle with the girls from the young Roma mentorship programme, this time dedicated to civic engagement and art, i.e. to the issue how one can build an awareness on creating in one's mother tongue via cultural heritage and artistic expression, starting from one's own experience and origin.

At the session, together with the artist, writer and activist Dzemiliana Abdulova, the president of "Barikanipe" Roma Cultural and Media Centre, the girls expressed themselves creatively by writing a letter to themselves, describing the future that they imagine in several years. Following this, there were questions on the involvement of communities via art, preservation of Roma cultural heritage, but also how one can achieve the desired goals with small steps.

Abdulova shared her own experience with art, telling how it had helped her to be braver and tell her story via poetry, artistic performances and drawing; afterwards, the girls openly spoke about their ideas, next steps and support that they have in the community.

The activities are part of the project "Rooted in Solidarity:

Roma Women Leading with Their Voice, Vision and Power", funded by the European Local Democracy Association (ALDA) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD).



From Invisibility to Equality – Sustainable Inclusion and Legal Identity for the Roma Community



On the occasion of 8th April, the International Roma Day, there was an event “From Invisibility to Equality – Sustainable Inclusion and Legal Identity for the Roma Community” held in the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia. The event brought together representatives of institutions, international community, MPs and representatives of the Roma community around the joint efforts for bigger inclusion and equal access to rights, and it was in cooperation with the Interparty Parliamentary Group for Support of the Rights of the Roma, with the support of the National Democratic Institute, Romalitico and the OSCE Mission in Skopje.

The Executive Director of Romalitico, Elvis Shakiri, also participated at the panel discussion on sustainable inclusion and legal identity. He opened several systemic questions that the Roma community faces. Shakiri stated that it would be important that the Interparty Parliamentary Group directs its work this year towards overcoming segregation in primary education, on which the Strasbourg Human Rights Court has already reached a verdict, towards accelerated resolving of legalization cases for illegally constructed facilities, as well as towards enabling access to primary education for Roma of a more advanced age, which would then lead to their more active inclusion in the labour market.

At Romalitico they stated that they were ready to take upon themselves the role of a secretariat and provide expert and technical support to the Interparty Parliamentary Group in the process of preparation and improving of legal changes,

At the organization they stress that they remain dedicated to advancing legal identity, equal access to rights and creating specific solutions for overcoming the structural inequalities that Roma face, believing that these issues can have a real progress via a clear institutional focus, cooperation and political will

Young People in Strumica Learned How to Manage Their Personal Finances Better



Twenty young people from Strumica had a four-day training in financial literacy, held from 11th to 14th May at Up Hub in Strumica. The participants were acquainted with the bases of personal budgeting, saving and investment, but also with the facts on how these everyday decisions fit into the broader economic system, via taxes and public finances.

The young people nowadays more and more often manage their money independently, facing numerous digital offers and financial risks for which they often do not have sufficient knowledge, and this was what the trainers Olga

Rajchikj and Plamen Todorov based the training part on investment, focusing on the risk and yield assessment, presenting the investment as a process of analysis, rather than a random choice.

“Financial skills do not mean that you only know how to calculate the difference between a revenue and expenditure. They imply that you know how to set priorities, recognize a risk, make a decision based on information and think about the consequences of this decision”, says Rajchikj, stressing that with the young people it is especially important to build this in time, because the small financial habits later become the basis for bigger security and independence.

Apart from the theoretical part, the participants had the opportunity to present their own conclusions at the end of the training, applying what they have learned to specific examples.

The activity is part of the project “Youth Network on Financial Literacy of the Southeast”, supported by the Swiss Government via Civica Mobilitas and implemented by the associations Promo Idea and Novus from Strumica, together with “Kruna Plus” association from Radovich.

Skopje Host to European and Regional Cultural Events



In the middle of May, for several days Skopje grew into a centre of the independent cultural scene, gathering artists, cultural workers and representatives of European cultural networks from the country, region and broader. The occasion was two connected events, the “Culture for Development” Forum (13th and 14th May) and BEYOND regional conference (15th and 16th May), organised by Heartefact in cooperation with Clubtura, Cooperativa, A25 Foundation for Culture and Euradia, in spaces recognisable for the local independent scene, such as the Cinema in the Railway Building and “Matichno” Youth Centre.

“Culture for Development” Forum, the first of the two events, was opened by the Deputy Head of Mission at the

Swiss Embassy, Michal Harari, who stressed the importance of the support to independent culture in circumstances of more and more limited long-term financing, reminding that culture is an essential part of democratic societies. At the same event, similar message was sent by Sarah Maliqi from Heartefact, stressing the role of the socially engaged art in building of more resilient communities.

In the two days of discussions, the participants spoke about the instable funding of the sector, shrinking of the public space for culture and the more difficult work conditions for the artists, but also about the need of a stronger regional and European connectivity. The representatives of European networks, among which Culture Action Europe and IETM, agreed that it was the Balkans experience, sustainable via solidarity and self-organization, had something to offer to the broader European cultural scene.

The work sessions resulted in specific recommendations for protection of the artistic freedom, preservation of physical and digital cultural spaces and bigger inclusion of the young people in the sector. In this way, Skopje once again positioned itself as a place where the independent culture from the Balkans meeting the European movements.

The activities are part of the project “Culture for Development”, supported by the Swiss Government and implemented by the Heartefact Fund.

Support, Mentorship and New Possibilities for Development of CSOs in Radovich



The Civil Society Resource Centre has continued with organizing open days throughout the country, in order to provide direct support at local level. On 12th June, there was a meeting with the local organizations in Radovich, intended for exchange of experience and discussion on the challenges and possibilities for development of the civil society in the region.

Stole Georgiev, the regional expert for the Southeast Planning Region, informed the people present on the advisory

and mentorship support available for the organizations from the region, while Valentina Velichkovska, the Executive Director of the Civil Society Resource Centre presented the current state of affairs in the civil society and the available opportunities for financing and capacity strengthening. In the open discussion, the participants spoke about the real needs of the local organizations, stressing that the future support should be adjusted to them.

The participants had positive assessment of the meeting. The representatives of the local organizations stressed that such initiatives contribute to establishment of the civil sector as an important corrective factor in the society, and they especially saluted the advisory and mentorship services of the Centre, which help them to plan their activities better and build new partnerships.

“The open day was a useful opportunity for direct communication and familiarization with the support offered by CSRC. We especially salute the possibility for direct cooperation with the regional expert on civil society. We believe that his presence in the field and his mentorship support will be a significant benefit for the organizations in the process of strengthening of their capacities, development of new initiatives and creation of sustainable partner-

ships”, said Evgenija Doneva from ADMELIORA, expressing her expectation that these activities would also continue in the future.

The event is part of the project “EU Support to Civil Society Resource Centre – Phase 2”, funded by the European Union, implemented by Civil Society Resource Centre Foundation, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, the

Association for Democratic Initiatives – Gostivar and Media Plus – Shtip.

Municipalities Were Interested in Developing Socio-Economic Services for Women and Girls of Vulnerable Categories



On 19th June, the Community of the Local Self-Government Units (ZELS), NALAS and GIZ held their first on-line info session for the municipalities and providers of social services interested in applying to the Open Call of the Programme for Capacity Strengthening of the Municipalities to Advance Socio-Economic Participation of Women and Girls from Vulnerable Categories. The session was attended by more than 15 municipalities and several service providers, focusing on two vulnerable groups: women and girls victims of gender based or domestic violence, and women and girls living in rural or remote areas.

The goal of the Programme is to enable the municipalities to develop integrated socio-economic services, a combina-

tion of social, education and employment services, based on evidence that fit the multi-layered needs of these target groups. Within the process, the eight best ranked municipalities will participate at the on-line course on social mapping and policy creation, four of them will receive additional support to conduct social mapping, and in the end two municipalities will be selected for direct financial and technical support amounting to EUR 7,000 each, intended for establishing and initial implementation of new services.

The activities will then take place in several phases, from social mapping in the field and training in the autumn of 2026, by designing service concepts, to their establishment and implementation in 2027, with a final exchange of experience in October 2027.

The capacity strengthening programme is part of the project “Bridges of Inclusion” implemented by NALAS and its Western Balkans members, within the regional project “Advancing Socioeconomic Participation in Municipalities in the Western Balkans” (SPARK), implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Safety and Health at Work Must also Cover Psycho-Social Risks

On the occasion of the World Day of Safety and Health at Work, on 28th April in Skopje there was an event dedicated to the psychosocial aspects of work, stress, mental health of the workers and need of healthy psychosocial working environments. The event was organised by the Council for Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of North Macedonia, with the project “Towards Safe and Healthy Working Environment in North Macedonia”, implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with the financial support of the European Union.

The focus of the event was the message that safety and health at work are not only physical protection, but they also imply systemic care about the mental wellbeing, work

organization and stress prevention. The representatives of the institutions, European Union, ILO, employers and trade unions that participated at the event agreed that dealing with contemporary risks at work place asks for a coordinated approach, strong social dialogue and clear determination for prevention.

The State Labour Inspectorate announced that the number of fatal injuries at work had been decreased compared to the previous year, and the conducted inspection supervisions for safety and health at work in 2025 surpassed the planned number. The institutions stressed that only by a systemic approach by all stakeholders the unwanted consequences can be lowered to minimum.

The participants also spoke about the need for protection of the dignity of the workers via collective agreements, instead of only by working conditions that go beyond international standards, as well as about the importance that the families of victims are not forgotten in the discussions on work safety.

In the expert part of the programme, domestic and international experts spoke about the prevention of the psychosocial risks by work organization, role of the European researching networks in the development of intervention strategies, as well as about the international experience in management of these risks, such as the Norway example.

The ILO team stated that although the system for safety and health at work functions, with tens of thousands of conducted inspection supervisions and thousands of determined irregularities, the focus is still mostly on visible,

physical risks, while the psychosocial risks remain insufficiently recognized and recorded.

The event was concluded with a workshop on designing of healthy psychosocial work environments, with a clear message that the future of safety and health at work depends on the ability of the system to recognize and address all risks, visible and invisible. The project “Towards Safe and Healthy Working Environment in North Macedonia” continues to work on strengthening the national framework on safety and health at work via reforms, institutional strengthening, digitalization and support of social partners.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Court Found Discrimination against Individual Women Farmers in Their Access to Health Insurance



The Basic Civil Court reached a verdict that found that individual women farmers are victims to indirect, prolonged and intersectional discrimination when fulfilling their health insurance rights, specifically the right to salary compensation during pregnancy, birth and motherhood, as well as during temporary being prevented to work due to illness or injury. With this verdict, the Government and the Ministry of Health are obliged to initiate changes and amendments to the Law on Health Insurance.

The verdict followed the lawsuit for protection from discrimination (action popularis), filed by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, as part of the

project “Equality Now – Empowering the Marginalised Communities for Social Inclusion and Non-discrimination”, supported by the Swiss Government via Civica Mobilitas.

At the Court they stated that although individual women farmers are included in the system for mandatory health insurance and formally they are insured, in practice they do not have equal access to the rights resulting from this system. According to the court, this is a seemingly neutral legal rule that recognized the women farmers are insured, but it actually excludes them from crucial financial compensations, despite paying a lower basis when calculating the benefits, still remaining really obliged to pay them in the system.

The procedure also took into consideration the 2023 opinion of the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, which pointed out that the exclusion of this category of women from the compensations for pregnancy, birth, motherhood and temporary inability to work is a form of an indirect discrimination, with an appeal for urgent legal changes.

The problem, as it is stressed in the procedure, has a strikingly social dimension. The women farmers are often forced to work even in pregnancy or sickness, because being absent means directly losing the income, which is a cycle of vulnerability and additional marginalization, opposed to the principle of protection of motherhood and gender equality.

The court stated that there this was a systemic problem which results from the legal framework itself, rather than from individual cases, and that existing measures for financial support, although useful, are not a real systemic solution. Therefore, according to the verdict, the only way to real access to the rights of the individual women farmers

would be an essential change of the law.

Debate in Parliament Assessed with 5.7, New Digital Tools and Educational Initiatives for Bigger Transparency and Participation Promoted

The Swiss Programme for Parliament Support has continued with activities directed to bigger openness, responsibility and inclusiveness of the legislative house, via analyses of the parliament work, digital tools for transparency and educational contents for the citizens and young people.

One of the novelties is the educational module “Journalism in Action: Learning about Democracy by Research”, which has been piloted in three primary schools as part of the subject of civic education, in order to the students to think critically about their role as active citizens.

The programme also invests in digital solutions that bring the Parliament closer to the citizens. The web platform for offices for communication with the citizens provides scheduling meeting with the MPs and monitoring of the submitted initiatives, while the application “Ask the AI Assistant”, developed via a parliamentary hackathon with students, uses artificial intelligence to analyse the plenary sessions, making it easier for the citizens, journalists and institutions to search through the comprehensive video materials.

The continuous monitoring of the work of the Parliament showed that the quality of the debate was assessed with 5.7 on the scale of 1 to 10, according to the recent report “Overview of the Parliament: Monitoring Report of the Quality of the Debate in the Parliament (July – December 2025)”.

The mobile caravan of the Parliament, which this year takes



place for the third time, has placed a stronger focus on the young people and universities by promoting new digital tools. The caravan started on 27th April in Shtip and ended on 5th June with an event in Skopje, passing through Ohrid, Bitola, Sveti Nikole, Prilep, Gostivar and Tetovo.

The Swiss Parliamentary Support Programme is a project of the Swiss Government, under the auspices of the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), in partnership with the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje (IDSCS) and the Center for Change Management (CCM).

Corruption Present in Health Care: Every Fifth Health Care Worker Has Faced It

ESE association published a research “Corruption in Health Sector – Corruption from Inside and Outside”, conducted within the project “Stronger System for More Just Protection; Decreasing Corruption in Health Sector”, with the support of the French Development Agency via Expertise France, in cooperation with the Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians.

“Every fifth health care worker has faced corruption in some way. Our research among health care workers has shown that they are aware about the existence of the corruption in the sector, and part of them have been included in or have witnessed such cases”, say the people of ESE.

The research, conducted among the health care workers



and managers in the public health care institutions, shows that corruption in the health sector is a systemic problem, present also in the relation with the patients and in the inner functioning of the institutions.

Almost one quarter of the health care workers (22.2%) have been directly or indirectly exposed to corruption in their relations with the patients in the last 12 months. Most common are direct demand for money, gifts, reference to private services with the same doctor and recommending medicines or laboratories for personal benefit. An especially risky area is the gynaecological and obstetrician work, where 88.5% of the people surveyed say that certain corruptive requests are a recurring thing.

According to the research data, every fifth health care worker has been a direct witness or has heard from colleagues about cases or requesting an intimate service in exchange for a health care service. At the same time, only around one quarter feel informed or educated about this phenomenon.

Corruption is present with employment, promotions and

distribution of resources. More than 63% think that it influences career advancements from time to time or often, while 31.7% believe that their institution implements a code of ethics or an anti-corruption policy in practice.

“According to the research that we have conducted with the health care workers, the initiative for corruption also comes both the doctors, and also from the patients or their family members”, say ESE representatives.

Non-reporting is one of the most serious challenges. Only about 7% of the people surveyed have formally reported corruption, and the main reasons for keeping quiet are listed as lack of trust that something will be changed, fear of consequences and lack of evidence. Only 17.3% think that the whistle-blowers are sufficiently protected.

The most important measures listed by the health care workers are protection of whistle-blowers (77%), followed by stricter sanctions and controls, bigger transparency and better working conditions.

Law on Higher Education under the Pressure of Criticism and Expectations

The Government has adopted the final text of the Law on Higher Education, which goes for Parliament review next, but it has already caused a broad institutional and academic debate.

The government representatives defend the law as a step towards modernization of the university system. The Vice Prime Minister Bekim Salii stressed that it includes proposals from the universities and that nobody will be fired, while the Minister of Education Vesna Janevska explained that X-Index (scholarly indicator that combines the number of publisher papers and their quotations by other authors) will no longer be the main criterion for being elected into a title, but rather an additional element that will only have a role when the number of points is equal.

The opposition and the academic community remain critical. The independent academic trade union stated that most of their proposals had not been accepted, especially in the part of university autonomy and financing of science. The Youth Educational Forum (YEF) warns that the students are marginalized, with only one representative out of 11 members of the university student body, i.e. around 9% in the decision making, while the Forum for Changes

in Education assesses that the law is an instrument for political control, stating that seven out of 15 members of the Quality Council are appointed directly by the Government.

The university professor Sahmedin Saliiu thinks that the composition of the new University Council has been improved compared to the previous versions, adding that the X-Index should remain only as an orientation criterion, rather than a condition for a scholarly title. Professor Aziz Pollozhani warns that hasty solutions that endanger the rights of the students can undermine the trust in the institutions.

The above listed information is part of the text “Government Has Adopted the Final Text of the Law on Higher Education, Debate Intensifying before Parliamentary Procedure” prepared within the project “Advocacy for Inclusive Development”, supported by the Swiss Government via Civica Mobilitas, implemented by the Forum for Reasonable Policies, ISSH and BIRC.

Meeting with Citizens from Gevgelija and Bogdanci on Main Local Issues

The demographic problem of young people moving out and population aging, health sector problems, ecology and agriculture were some of the main topics that the citizens of Gevgelija and Bogdanci shared with the representatives of RESIS Institute.

In Gevgelija, the citizens mostly spoke about the situation in health sector, pointing out the lack of paediatricians and specialists in the hospital, as well as neglected local clinics in the surrounding area that used to function in a quality way. The people present expressed their concern about the massive emigration, but also about the fact that agricul-

ture is practically disappearing, while the main movers of the local economy are the casinos. Some of the other problems mentioned were the lack of public transport from smaller populated areas to the city, poor ecological awareness with the population and the inaccessibility of public institutions to the people with disabilities.

In Bogdanci, on the other hand, the emigration of the young people was also among the main concerns of the citizens, who spoke about the need of a bigger support to elderly who remain alone in their homes. The citizens also spoke about the lack of specialists and the biochemical laboratory in the municipality, as well as the dissatisfaction because of the concentration of energy capacities in their vicinity, describing that they are literally surrounded by windmills, and new photovoltaic plants are announced without any specific benefit for the local population. Other problems shared by the citizens with RESIS Institute were fires in the

devastated local forests and the lack of firefighting service, but also the lack of safety of the regional road to Gevgelija, for which the citizens ask to be urgently completed with a road barrier.

The collected information will be additionally processed and presented to the editorial board of the community medium “Local Aktiv”, made by local journalists and civil activists, in order for the main problems of the citizens of Gevgelija and Bogdanci to become investigative and analytical stories that will increase their visibility and encourage institutional solutions.

The meetings are part of a broader cycle of consultations in the Eastern, Southeast and Vardar regions, intended for preparation of new contents of community media.

Macedonian Municipalities with New Steps towards Just Energy Transition

At the community forum, organised by Eco-Svest in cooperation with the municipality of Kichevo and the local community of Belica, representatives of institutions, municipalities, TEC Oslomej, business sector, trade unions, CSOs and educational institutions spoke about the role of the Local Economic Social Council (LESC) Kichevo in the process of just transition and the possibilities for the region to be more actively involved in the national processes of energy transformation.

One of the main recommendations of the forum was the reactivation of LESC Kichevo, which has existed since 2016, but it remains inactive. The participants agreed that the council should be expanded with representatives of all relevant local stakeholders and grow into a permanent platform for dialogue, preparation of joint projects and advocating for the interests of the region.

“It is necessary to have bigger involvement of the municipalities in the preparation of the national strategies and plans. The coal regions need additional financial means, better infrastructure and public transport for economic development”, stated Darko Beleski, Head of the Local Economic Development Sector in the Municipality of Kichevo.

As priority possibilities for development of the region they indicated the industrial development zones, renewable energy sources, agriculture, bee keeping and tourism, with a special stress on the unused tourist and cultural potential of the Kichevo region. The participants also pointed out the need for strengthening the electrical energy infrastructure and improving the conditions for local entrepreneurship.

At Eco-Svest they reminded that the organizations worked on scenarios and analyses for alternative economic development of the region as early as 2020, in collaboration with the local communities. “We mapped a number of natural and cultural attractions that have not been used at all. Kichevo people very well recognize these potentials and therefore they have to be actively involved in the decision

making when it comes to transformation of the region”, stressed Elena Nikolovska from Eco-Svest.

A positive example was the experience of LESC Bitola, where the active involvement of the institutions, trade unions and CSOs contributed to bigger participation of the region in the national processes of just transition. In line with this, there was also an announcement of an initiative to establish a network of local economic and social councils at national level, with stable financing for their functioning.

The conclusion of the meeting was the successful just transition asks for strong local institutions, active participation of the citizens, transparent management of funds and bigger role of the municipalities in policy creation for development of the regions dependent on coal.

As part of the efforts to strengthen the local capacities for energy transition, Eco-Svest, supported by Heinrich Bel Foundation and Sweden, organized a study visit to Croatia for the mayors and secretaries of the municipalities of Bitola, Kichevo, Novaci, Demir Kapija, Kumanovo and Vevchani. In the period of 15th to 18th June, they got acquainted with successful models of civic economic communities in Zagreb, Pushka, Zabok, Krizevci and Rieka, where the citizens and local self-governments invest, produce and manage renewable energy together.

The study visit was directed to exchange of experiences that will help in the implementation of the new Law on Energy and the National Plan on Energy and Climate at local level. The participants had the possibility to directly visit the projects and see for themselves the economic, social and ecological benefits that this model brings. The experience that was learnt will help the Macedonian municipalities apply the new legal possibilities more easily and develop the local energy initiatives in cooperation with the citizens, institutions and business sector.

AJM and UNDP Initiated an Informal Network on Information Integrity



The Association of the Journalists of Macedonia (AJM), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held the first consultative meeting to establish an informal Network for Information Integrity in North Macedonia.

The initiative is implemented within the global support of the United Nations for networks for information integrity and aims to connect institutions, media, CSOs, the academic and technological community, as well as interna-

tional partners, in dealing with the challenges of the modern information space.

The network concept was presented at the meeting, and the participants exchanged opinions about its structure, priorities and possibilities for joint action in strengthening the information integrity and resilience of the public to disinformation and manipulative contents.

Participants agreed that the more and more frequent abuse of digital technologies, spreading disinformation and hate speech ask for coordinated approach and partnership among all stakeholders, in order to protect the right of the citizens for correct and reliable information.

AJM and UNDP announced that they would continue to work with the interested parties on further development of the initiative, in order to establish a sustainable network which will contribute to improvement of the media environment and the trust in the public information space.

Metamorphosis Marked the International Day of Factchecking

Metamorphosis Foundation marked 2nd April, the International Fact Checking Day, stressing the importance of checked information and the role of fact checkers in dealing with disinformation.

As a full member of the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN) since 2019 and a certified member of the European Fact Checking Standard Network (EFCNSN), Metamorphosis has actively contributed to strengthening of the integrity of the public information space with Vistinomer, Meta and Portalb.

In the past year, Metamorphosis issues released almost 1,000 fact checks, analyses of manipulative claims and checks of fulfilment of election promises. At the organization they say that spreading of disinformation, especially via artificial intelligence and social networks is more and more of a challenge, because fact checking remains crucial for the informed public and democratic processes.

The annual event was held under the motto “We Stand for Facts!”, under which the factcheckers around the world stressed their dedication to accuracy, transparency and fight against disinformation.



We stand
for
facts.

Fact-Checking Day.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Donor Circle of Konekt Provided Support to Three Civic Initiatives



Creating an enabling environment for CSOs requires development of new models of support and bigger involvement of the citizens and the private sector. Such an example is the Donor Circle of Konekt, which for a seventh year in a row has connected the individual and corporate donors with CSOs that want to contribute to resolving social challenges.

The seventh donor circle of Konekt took place on 4th June 2026 in the venue of Macedonian Telecom in Skopje, where more than 90 citizens joined the event by donating and fundraising activities. With joint donations, 601,217 denars were collected for three initiatives of CSOs.

The support will be directed to:

- Association for Help and Support to People with Aphasia HOPE SKOPJE, for opening the first specialized Centre for People with Aphasia. The Centre will provide expert help and support to the people who face speech problems after a stroke, as well as for their families in the recovery process.
- KRIK Centre for Youth Activism, for improvement of the conditions for supported living of people with disabilities in four group homes and for development of the activities in “Scream” creative centre. The funds will contribute to creation of better conditions for quality life, socializing, creativity and occupational therapy.

- “All for Fair Trials” Coalition, for continuation of the independent monitoring of court procedures. The support will enable monitoring of additional 100 court proceedings and contribution to bigger transparency, accountability and fair access to justice for the citizens.

When selecting the initiatives, Konekt gives the advantage to CSOs with limited financial and human resources, who have less access to traditional sources of financing, but work on significant issues for the community.

The donor circle is a licenced model of The Funding Network, and Konekt is a partner of this network in North Macedonia and the only organization that implements and promotes this methodology in the country.

Council for Cooperation with the Government Supported the Reaction of CSOs on the Law on Games of Chance



At the session of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society, held on 16th June 2026, the members supported a joint reaction of four CSO networks regarding the new Law on Games of Chance and Entertaining Games. When the draft law was being prepared, CSOs were not consulted, nor was the Council, and the text was not published at all for comments at the Single National Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER).

The Network for Protection from Discrimination, the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Platform for Gender Equality and the Macedonian Platform against Poverty sent a joint reaction to the MPs, stating that the proposed changes are not only a technical change, but rather a serious precedent with possible long-term consequences for the civil society, protection of vulnerable categories and democracy in the country.

The organizations reminded that for decades they have provided direct support to people with disabilities, victims of domestic and gender-based violence, old and feeble bodied persons, children, young people, women, Roma and other citizens and communities in vulnerable position. They asked that the proposed changes are not supported in this form, but to be withdrawn or additionally changed, in order for the CSOs, national disability organizations and

the Red Cross remain clearly recognized in the law as entities that can obtain and implement funds intended for vulnerable categories.

The members of the Council concluded that CSOs should be listed in Article 18 Paragraph 1 of the draft law as users of funds for work with vulnerable categories, indicating the necessity for a transparent and inclusive process of public policy creation and clear recognition of CSOs as partners to the institutions. The Council supported the reaction and tasked the Office for Cooperation with NGOs to prepare a written reaction to the Ministry of Finance and the office of the Prime Minister, as well as a request for the Parliament to organize a public debate.

Despite these initiatives, the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the new law on 29th June 2026. According to the information of the Ministry of Finance, the funds from games of chance and entertaining games, amounting from 60 to 120 million denars per year, will continue to be used for financing the national disability organizations, their associations, citizen associations for fight against domestic violence and the Red Cross of the Republic of Macedonia.

In this way, part of the demands of the civil sector were taken into consideration, because the listed categories of organizations remain recognized as beneficiaries of the funds. Still, in the final text, the broader formulation that recognizes the CSOs in general as a partner in the work with all vulnerable categories has not been returned, nor was there a transparent and inclusive consultation process, as requested by the networks and the Council.

Council for Cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society Adopted the 2026-2028 Communication Strategy

Bigger visibility, stronger participation and more inclusive dialogue between the Government and the civil society are in the focus of the new Communication Strategy of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society for the period of 2026-2028.

The Council adopted the Strategy at the session held on 16th June 2026. The document was previously reviewed and adjusted at a workshop held on 15th and 16th June, with the expert support of the project "Technical Support for Improving the Enabling Environment for CSOs in the Republic of North Macedonia", financed by the European Union.

The goal of the Strategy is to improve the institutional and inclusive dialogue between the Government and civil society on issues relevant for the development of the civil society in North Macedonia.

The Strategy lists three areas of action: strengthening the participation of the CSOs in consultations and monitoring of public policies; improving the visibility and public recognition of the role and work of the Council; and strengthening the systematic communication of the members of the Council with the institutions and the organizations that they represent.

According to the situational analysis, although the Council has established practices for transparency and information, there is room for bigger visibility outside the circle of directly affected parties, bigger participation of CSOs in the consultations and more regular presence in media.

The Strategy states that communication should be based on transparency and accountability, communication based on evidence, clearness and simplicity, inclusiveness and broad coverage and accessibility. There is special attention to the outreach to smaller and less visible organizations, as well as to those that are no part of the already established networks.

In the coming period, there are planned activities to improve the institutional communication, public relations, internal and external communication. They include regular reporting via the web page and social media, bigger media presence, information sessions and thematic meetings with CSOs, as well as creating clear and accessible communication materials.

With the Strategy, communication is recognized as an important part of strengthening of transparency, participation and structured dialogue between the institutions and civil society. Its implementation will be specified with annual communication plans, defined activities, deadlines, responsibilities and indicators.

NEWS
**FROM CIVICA
MOBILITS**

International Roma Day through the Civil Society Prism



Меѓународниот ден на Ромите е уште една можност за The International Roma Day is another possibility to check the progress of the society regarding the challenges that our citizens face, but also a possibility to recognise the contribution of everybody that works on daily basis to overcome them.

In this process, CSOs have the key role. They are a bridge between the community and institutions, providing information, support, advocacy and specific services where the system is often insufficiently available. With field work, education, psychosocial and legal support, accompanying the people to the institutions, economic empowerment, advocacy, research and public campaigns, they contribute

to improving the access to rights and services, decreasing discrimination and bigger involvement of Roma in the social life. Or, as Samet Skenderi from InSok organisation, “CSOs always carry the weight of the daily challenges of the Roma community, but at the same time carry the light of hope”.

Past years have shown that the support of Roma organizations brings concrete results.

“Roma CSOs, including our association, have achieved significant results in the field, such as the increased level of information with more than 1,200 Roma women when it comes to sexual and reproductive health, support in hundreds of cases for fulfilling social and family rights, work on discrimination cases with accompanying them to institutions, as well as support in access to health services and reacting to irregularities, including illegal payments”, stress the employees at the Association Initiative for the Rights of Shuto Orizari Women”.

[Read the complete news.](#)

New Code of Ethics for Journalists: Process that Returns Trust in the Media



At the time when information is spread with enormous speed, and the boundaries between checked news and misinformation have become less and less visible, the topic of ethical journalism has become crucial for the society. Journalism, as voice of the public, has the responsibility that is nowadays bigger than ever, especially at times when media space is flooded by various sources that do not always follow professional standards.

The first Code of Ethical Journalism was adopted in 2001 and since then it has not been changes which stresses the need of it being adapted to new conditions of reporting.

In this context, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) in partnership with the Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM) implements the project “Strengthening the Ethical Standards for Bigger Trust in Media” supported by Civica Mobilitas. The project aims to stimulate higher standards of professionalism and responsibility via a process that is not only formal updating, but also essential rethinking and adapting of journalism ethics to modern conditions.

It is especially important that the process of creation of the new Code of Ethics take place in an inclusive manner, with active participation of the journalist community. The work group made of AJM, Macedonian Institute for Media and Council of Media Ethics representatives has included more than 200 journalists since 2024, to contribute with proposals and comments to the creation of the draft version. The consultations are still going on, and during this time, the work group has been holding meetings, implementing proposals and changes by using experience from regional and European ethical practices.

[Read the complete story.](#)

Our Power, Our Planet: Civil Sector the Leader of Changes



Every year, 22nd April reminds us that the planet is not protected only with big promises, but with daily work, decisions, practical solutions and communities which know that they have the power to make a change. This year's motto of the Day of the Planet Earth, "Our Power, Our Planet" especially closely related to the work of the CSOs which use knowledge, activism and direct work with the citizens to turn environmental awareness into concrete action.

Civica Mobilitas has recognized and supported the role of CSOs in the fight to protect the planet via specific financial and programme support.

Within the programme, there have been 46 grants allocated to 34 CSOs, with a total budget of 75,729,198

denars. This is 7.9 percent of the total budget. Civica Mobilitas firmly stands behind this vision with a continuous support to the civil sector, and behind these figures there are organizations that work in schools, municipalities, settlements, local communities, with young people, with people with disabilities, with institutions and with citizens who want a healthier living environment and who prove on daily basis that our planet depends precisely on our power.

Civica Mobilitas grantees are aware about their role as a bridge between citizens and institutions, between knowledge and habits, between problems and solutions.

[Read the complete news.](#)

CSOs Contribution to Media Freedom

"Shaping Future into Peace" is the global message for this year's 3rd May – World Press Freedom Day, dedicated to the role of journalism in the protection of human rights, democratic processes and public interest.

The day has been marked since 1993, following a decision of the United Nations and recommendation of UNESCO, in order to stress the importance of media freedom, but also to show the risks and pressures that are faced by journalists around the world.

In the local context, these processes significantly rely on civil sector, which uses various initiatives to contribute to strengthening of the professional standards, public debate and media literacy. Civica Mobilitas programme has continuously supports these initiatives in the last years, directed towards development of the media sphere and strengthening an informed society.

On the occasion of this day, we have spoken with representatives of the Macedonian Institute for Media, one of Civica Mobilitas grantees, on their views about the role

of the CSOs, their achievements, challenges that they face, as well as the perspectives for the future development of media freedom.

“CSOs have a crucial role in the protection and promotion of media freedom via continuous support to journalists, strengthening of the professional standards and advocacy for better policies”, say the people at MIM.

According to them, they act as a corrective of the institutions, but also as a partner of the media community, providing space for dialogue, critical checking and joint response to threats to freedom of expression. In the Macedonian context, this role is especially significant because of the long-term structural weaknesses in the media sphere.

Од МИМ посочуваат дека нивната работа со години е At MIM, they indicate that their work for years has been directed



to strengthening of journalism via education, analyses and public debates, as well as towards advancing media literacy.

[Read the complete news.](#)

Practical Support for Easier Financial Reporting



On April 30, 2026, at the premises of the Civil Resource Centre (CRC) in Skopje, the Civica Mobilitas team held a workshop on financial reporting. The workshop was intended for the recipients of the partnership grants from the CM-PG-2 call.

A total of 19 participants from all 11 grantees, including project coordinators and persons responsible for finance, discussed with the Civica Mobilitas team how to more easily and efficiently track and report expenses incurred during the implementation of project activities.

The Civica Mobilitas team presented the financial reporting system through the digital platform for electronic sharing, uploading, and document management.

The steps for uploading documentation and generating the final report were explained. The grantees were also given direct access to the system, with practical live support.

The grantees showed interest in how the system functions, as well as in other issues related to the implementation of their specific grants.

“The workshop was truly useful in several respects, especially the part with the shared Excel spreadsheet for expenses and the financial report. This approach enables very precise budget monitoring and significantly reduces the risk of overlaps. We would also like to highlight the clarity of the tables and the clear way they were explained, as well as the support provided for accessing and using the platform,” added Simona Levi from the First Children’s Embassy in the World “Megjashi.”

The workshop contributed to a better understanding of the financial reporting procedures and to more efficient communication between the grantees and the Civica Mobilitas team during the implementation of the projects.

Monitoring Visits Have Confirmed the Sustainability of Partnerships and Grant Results

In the period of 8th–21st May, the Civica Mobilitas team had monitoring visits of the grantee organizations. The visits took place in the premises of the grantee organizations, and the meetings were most often attended also by the representatives of the partner organizations.

With respect to the fact that the biggest part of the projects enters their final stage, the visits were an opportunity for discussions with the organizations on their experiences in the implementation of grants, challenges that they faced, results achieved, but also about the value of partnerships that have developed during the cooperation.

The visits included the whole team of Civica Mobilitas, and the discussions took place in Skopje, Bitola, Gostivar, Kumanovo, Negotino, Struga, Strumica and Shtip.

Besides the administrative and programme aspects, the focus of the discussions was on the changes that the grants have encouraged in the organizations and communities, lessons learnt, new initiatives that resulted from the cooperation and possibilities for further joint actions.

The team had a possibility to hear firsthand how the organizations build partnerships, how they deal with local challenges and in what ways they projects contribute to stronger civic participation, networking and local development.

One of the most significant conclusions from the visits was that the partnerships established via Civica Mobilitas grants had largely grown into something



more than a formal project cooperation. Almost all visited organizations assessed their partnership as successful, functional, and especially important, sustainable also after the completion of the grant.

[Read the complete news.](#)

„Не ни треба уште една апликација, туку некој конечно да нè слушне“



The young people from Krushevo, Kumanovo and Tetovo between the slow procedures and the new attempt for a digital dialogue with municipalities

In many municipalities around North Macedonia, the road from an idea to a real change with the young people often ends even before it has begun. An attempt to report a problem, several attempts to find the real institution and, in the end, a feeling that response is late or not there at all.

“We don’t need another application, but we want to be finally heard”, said a young participant at the workshop in Kumanovo. A sentence that carries within a frustration, but also an expectation that the situation can be changed.

It is this gap between the young people and the municipalities that is the focus of the project “My Voice in My City”, which is being implemented in Krushevo, Kumanovo and Tetovo and attempts to open a new channel of communication via a digital tool based on artificial intelligence..

The young people from the three cities say that they most often know where the problem is, but they neither know where exactly to report it, nor how to monitor its resolution. In Krushevo, the communication with the

municipality sometimes functions informally, but when it comes to official initiatives, the process becomes slow and unclear. In Kumanovo and Tetovo, on the other hand, there is a predominant feeling that information is not easily accessible, and there is rarely any feedback.

The project has been implemented by the Youth Alliance – Krushevo, the Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID) and the Institute for Community Development – Tetovo, while the young people are involved not only as beneficiaries, but also as active participants in designing the solution.

At the artificial intelligence (AI) workshops held in Skopje, Kumanovo and Tetovo, the young people openly spoke about the barriers in their communication with the institutions. Part of them admitted that they often did not know where to start from when they wanted to report problems, nor did they know how their voice was processed further.

“I liked it that someone finally asked what we really needed, rather than presenting us with an already prepared solution”, says Zhivorad Arsik, one of the participants. “In this way we can really influence how the tool would look like, starting from the design up to its contents.”

In the beginning, part of the young people were suspicious about the idea to use AI in their communication with the municipalities, but as the discussions developed, their views changed to more open acceptance of the fact that technology could ease and speed up the communication.

[Read the complete story.](#)

CSO Code as a Tool for Criticism and Praise by One's Own Community



On 2nd June 2026, at the premises of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), Civica Mobilitas team organized the first workshop on promoting the implementation of the CSO Code. The workshop brought together the Civica Mobilitas grantees from Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo and Gostivar to discuss the possibilities for strengthening the monitoring mechanisms of the Code, five years after its adoption.

The history and contents of the CSO Code was presented by Aleksandra Savevska from MCIC. She spoke about the goals of the workshop and the importance of self-regulation in the civil sector. Savevska stressed that building confidence with the citizens and the broader public remains one of the

biggest challenges and that the Code is an instrument for the organizations to confirm their support to the public interest.

Biljana Nasteska-Kalanoska from the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) presented the Journalists' Code as a good practice of self-regulation. She shared the AJM experience in the implementation of the Code so far, presented the implementation bodies and the monitoring mechanisms, described the challenges in its implementation and explained the need for its update. At the moment, AJM is working on revising the Code via an on-going project supported by Civica Mobilitas, a process that offers useful comparative views for the CSOs.

The central part of the workshop was dedicated to working in groups, led by Fanija Ivanovska from MCIC. The participants were divided in three groups, and each of the groups reviewed several pledges from the Code, with a task to identify no more than 10 necessary principles and standards fit for structured monitoring.

[Read the complete news.](#)

The Civil and Business Sectors Need Partnerships for Sustainable Cooperation



"From Short Term Donations to Long Term Partnerships"! This was the key message of the workshop "Strengthening the Cooperation between the Private Sector and Civil Society", which took place on 10th June in Skopje. More than 20 CSO representatives discussed how the cooperation with companies can develop into a sustainable model that creates broader social impact, instead of remaining at an ad-hoc support to events and activities.

The participants worked and discussed with Simon Forrester, an international Civica Mobilitas expert who shared European practices for structured and long-

term cooperation among the civil sector, business and institutions.

Forrester stated that the cooperation in a number of European countries is not limited to donations only, but it entails partnerships with clear rules and common goals. He gave the example of Denmark, where there is "Compact", a document that sets joint principles for cooperation. "This is useful because the organizations can refer to it when they want to cooperate with companies", he stressed.

He added that the corporate social responsibility has become more and more a framework for joint action, where in countries such as Denmark, Ireland and Italy there are partnerships developed in areas related to employment, education, social inclusion and local development.

The discussion about the state of affairs in North Macedonia was especially interesting. The participants shared their experiences which show that the companies most often support specific events and activities, while it is much less frequent for them to engage in longer-term partnerships which contribute to the development and sustainability of the organizations themselves.

The representatives of a number of organizations said that the cooperation with the local businesses is often built gradually, via personal contacts, trust and continuous communication. Examples of companies that provide financial support, training, products or services for implementation of activities of public interest were shared but also experiences that show

how difficult it is for the organizations to explain and present their impact before potential supporters.

[Read the complete news.](#)

“Every Journalist Is an Activist and Every Activist Is a Journalist”



Sara Tanaskoska is a young journalist from Struga. Until recently, she worked for a medium where the local themes were rare. Not because of lack of interest, but because the system simply provided no space for it. “I want to contribute more for my local community. So far, I have not had the possibility to thoroughly cover local themes in some medium, and I see this workshop as an opportunity to obtain knowledge and skills for it”, she said during the workshop of Local Activ in Ohrid.

At a distance of 130 kilometres, in Tetovo, Angel Dimovski, a young journalist, says something similar. “The main reason because of which I got involved is that I want to contribute to local journalism and resolving the problems in the community”, says he. And in Valandovo, the activist Ljubica Stojanovska had a different, yet a complementary reason: “I got involved in order to follow the current novelties on proper informing and advocacy before public institutions.” Three people, three different regions, one common problem and a conclusion that local communities do not have a voice of their own.

This is the core of the project “Community Media for Stronger Civil Society”, implemented by RESIS Institute and Council for Media Ethics of Macedonia (CMEM).

In June, RESIS and CMEM organised workshops in three regions, the Southeast, Southwest and Polog regions. The

workshops were used to set the foundations for future editorial boards of community media where there are no such. What the workshops confirmed was something that is probably felt by many people, but something that is rarely named: a big part of Macedonia is in danger of becoming a “media desert”. Not because there are no media, but because the existing ones do not produce contents coming from local communities and serving their public interest.

The political and corporate pressure on local media, their financial instability, low income of the journalists and the absence of instruments for civic communication... All of these challenges together have the same consequence: the citizens do not know that they have the right to demand, they do not know where to demand and often they do not know that their problem is a problem.

The participants at the workshops felt this on their own skin. In the discussions they showed the specific realities of each region. In the Polog region, the journalists and activists spoke about the bad urban planning and pollution in Tetovo. The region which, according to them, has had an increased risk of malignant diseases, but there is rarely appropriate media space for this. In the Southeast region, the focus was on illegal landfills and destruction of pine forests, but also on the “silent” emigration of the young people, a topic that almost nobody writes about. In the Southwest region, the participants opened the issues about drinking water, landfills and health care reforms.

[Read the complete story.](#)



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