

Civil Trust Building – Find Your Way through the Enlargement Labyrinth

Project kick-off event memo Budapest, 17-18 February 2012

I. Background

The “Civil Trust Building – Find Your Way through the Enlargement Labyrinth” is an international project which communicates the notion of enlargement with the involvement civil society organisations from 6 EU member states and 7 countries of the Western Balkans. The project runs between 1 January - 31 December 2012.

The project kick-off event took place in Budapest, Hungary on 17-18 February 2012 and was hosted by the project coordinator, the European House.

The project is supported by the European Commission DG Enlargement.

II. Participants

Representatives of project partners from the 6 EU member states:

Mr Hannes Meissner, The World of NGOs, Austria

Mr Miklos Barabas, European House, Hungary

Ms Iuliana Iliescu, Pro Democracy Association, Romania

Mr Samuel Arbe, Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Slovakia

Mr Primoz Prijanovic, CNVOS, Slovenia

Absent:

Ms Brankica Borovic, ARCI, Italy

Ms Antonella Valmorbida, Association of Local Democracy Agencies, France

Representatives of contact points from the 7 Western Balkans countries:

Ms Klotilda Tavani Kosta, Partners Albania – Center for Change and Conflict Management, Albania

Mr Sladjan Ilic, Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr Angel Cabarkapa, Centre for Peace and Non-violence Osijek, Croatia

Ms Liridona Ponosheci, Local Democracy Agency Kosovo, Kosovo

Mr Sreten Koceski, Community Development Institute Tetovo, Macedonia

Mr Sasa Marinkov, Local Democracy Agency Central and Southern Serbia, Serbia

Ms Stanka Parac Damjanovic, Association of Local Democracy Agencies, Serbia

Absent:

Ms Milena Boskovic, Local Democracy Agency Montenegro, Montenegro

A separate meeting will be organised by the European House for those who could not attend the kick-off meeting due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather conditions. Its date will be set after consultations. An ALDA representative will also be present.

III. Agenda of the meeting

1. Opening
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Presentation of participants
4. EU Enlargement: rationale and political background of the project
5. Review of project elements and agreement on the timetable of events
6. Distribution of tasks and responsibilities
7. Communication

8. Finances
9. AOB
10. Closing

III/1. Opening

The meeting was opened by Miklos Barabas, project coordinator, representative of European House, who, on behalf of the host organisation welcomed the participants.

III/2. Adoption of the agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted without modification.

III/3. Presentation of participants

The participants briefly presented themselves and the organisations they represent.

III/4. EU Enlargement: rationale and political background of the project

Participants had a vivid exchange of views on the current state of play and prospects of EU enlargement with special emphasis on the Western Balkans region. Civil society organisations can and should play an increasing role in this process. There was a general agreement that the „Civil Trust Building” project is a timely initiative that has the potential of influencing public opinion of the 6 participating EU member countries in favour of EU enlargement. They confirmed their readiness to contribute actively to the full implementation of the project.

III/5. Review of project elements and agreement on the timetable of events

On the basis of the project application participants had a detailed discussion on the different programme elements and agreed on a timetable. The main project programmes are the following:

III/5/a. Internship programme - 11-24 June

7 interns from the Western Balkans countries will be placed for a two-week internship with the 6 project partners in their respective countries.

The internship will take place simultaneously and scheduled for 11-24 June 2012.

The selection process has an open character and is assisted by the European Fund for the Balkans.

Interns should

- have an NGO background
- aged 18-35
- speak English.

The selected interns will have the task to

- work on the Civil Trust Building project
- assist the preparation and participate at the national citizens' consultations
- assist the preparation for the bus tour in September 2012
- provide news items for the project website
- liaise with the contact points of their country of origin
- share their experience after internship
- attend the evaluation event in Vienna (25 June)

Distribution of interns by country

The World of NGOs, Austria: Macedonia
 European House, Hungary: Croatia, Montenegro
 ARCI, Italy: Albania
 Pro Democracy Association, Romania: Kosovo
 Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Slovakia: Serbia
 CNVOS, Slovenia: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Note: the Hungarian project partner will receive 2 interns
 The internship programme is implemented with the support of the European Fund for the Balkans

Tasks:

- Receiving organisations will set up a programme for the interns and provide the necessary working conditions.
- Interns will liaise with the contact points of their respective countries.

III/5/b. National citizens' consultations - 11-24 June

National citizens' consultations on EU enlargement issues will be held in the six project partner countries (one consultation/country).

The consultations should have two keynote speakers, 50 participants are expected to attend and take place between 11-24 June 2012 (during the internship programme)

A list of participants is necessary to be signed by the participants.

The recommendations of the consultations will be used in drawing up the results of the projects.

Tasks:

Project partners will organise the consultations: venue, speakers, audience, media attention and will prepare a short memo of the recommendations of the consultations.

III/5/c. Mid-term evaluation - Vienna, 25 June

Participants: project managers from the 6 EU partner countries and the 7 interns

Tasks:

Review and evaluation of project implementation on a country-by-country basis. Discussion of the draft mid-term report to be presented to DG Enlargement.

III/5/d. Enlargement Labyrinth - 8-15 September

A 100 sqm labyrinth will be set up in five project partner countries. Participants meet in Budapest on 8 September 2012 and arrive at the last stop on 15 September 2012 in Udine, Italy (Friuli Doc Festival).

The Enlargement Labyrinth will be set up in central open-air locations in Hungary (Budapest) – Slovakia (Bratislava) – Austria (Klagenfurt) – Slovenia (Ljubljana) – Italy (Udine).

A mid-size bus will take with it participants from project partners and contact points: 15-20 persons to travel to the labyrinth locations. Labyrinth will be set up and dismantled by a separate building team.

Participants: project partners (from the 6 EU member countries) and contact point representatives (7 persons) from the Western Balkans countries.

Note: visa issue (e.g. participant from Kosovo will need a visa to enter Slovakia).

Labyrinth game: visitors will receive a “passport” with questions on enlargement. Information put on labyrinth walls will assist to answer correctly passport questions. Information on the countries of the Western Balkans will also be displayed. Labyrinth passport will be in local language.

Local food specialities (durable, easy to handle) of the Western Balkans and recipes to be displayed during activity.

Tasks:

- EH in consultation with the other project partners will work out the exact timetable and route of the tour.
- Project partners will identify the location and time of the labyrinth and take care of necessary permissions from local authorities.
- Mass media mobilisation.
- Project partners will translate “passport” questions into local language: AT, HU, IT, SK, SL
- Contact point representatives will bring food specialities.

III/5/e. Collecting views on international trains - October 2012

Opinions of travellers on EU enlargement will be collected on international trains crossing the project partner countries.

These will be organised on a country-by-country basis. It is recommended that at least 2 persons collect opinions on the trains.

Format: video, questionnaire

Tasks:

Action coordinated by EH with the involvement of project partners.

III/5/f. Project final evaluation - Rome, 1 December

The final evaluation will take place in Rome hosted by ARCI. Participants: project partners from the 6 EU partner countries and the 7 contact point representatives from the Western Balkans countries and Italian CSO representatives

Tasks:

Evaluation of project activities in the participating countries. Elaboration of recommendations. Discussion of the project final report to be presented to DG Enlargement.

III/6. Distribution of tasks and responsibilities

An agreement was reached on the distribution of tasks and responsibilities between project partners and contact point representatives. The result is reflected in the task sections of programme elements (III/5.).

III/7. Communication

During the debate the following communication tools and tasks with responsibilities were identified:

III/7/a. Website

The website of the project is <http://www.civiltrustbuilding.eu>. It gives information on the project and the development of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans.

Project partners and contact points will contribute to the content of the website. These can be own news and news from other sources (please indicate the source). Emphasis should be put on citizens' views of the 6 project partner countries.

Tasks:

Project partners and contact points should put a link on their own website pointing to <http://www.civiltrustbuilding.eu>.

Project partners and contact points should produce 2 news items/month for the website (in English). Important: citizens' views, concerns, comments should have a priority.

III/7/b. Social media

To assist social interaction the project of the website will contain a section/menu item containing social media tools of the internet including dedicated Facebook and Twitter pages of the project. The social media tools will enable participants to share their personal experience of the different events at which they participated and contribute to the positive perception of the project and raise its profile.

Tasks:

Active participation of project partners and contact points is foreseen and requested.

III/7/c. „Civil Trust-Building” booklet

The booklet is designed to introduce the idea of the project in the participating countries. It will contain the questionnaire and other useful information about the possibilities to join the project. The booklet will be available in 7 different languages (German, Hungarian, Italian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Romanian and English) to reach the widest possible audience. The booklet will be distributed in an organised manner in schools, universities and to youth organisations, other NGOs and local governments as well.

Tasks:

Project partners will contribute to the text of the booklet and assist its dissemination in their own country.

III/7/d. Questionnaire on enlargement

The questionnaire will serve as one of the means to collect citizens' views in the project partner countries on the EU enlargement process. The first part of the questionnaire will consist of 3 questions jointly used by project partners in the participating countries while in the second part (2-3 questions) project partners will have the possibility to use questions taking into account national characteristics. The questionnaire will be widely distributed during the project events, available on the website. Taxi drivers and postmen – depending on national situations – will also be involved in the distribution process. Special attention will be paid to distribute the questionnaire to young people. The questionnaire will be produced in 7 languages: German, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, Slovakian, Slovenian and English.

The questionnaire is not a representative poll and will not bear scientific conclusions.

Questionnaire will include yes/no questions and open-ended questions.

Basic findings should be discussed during the internship period, citizens' consultations, at the mid-term evaluation meeting and other project activities.

The results of the questionnaire will be used in the project final evaluation.

Tasks:

Questionnaire draft to be produced by European House and commented by project partners and contact points who will assist its wide distribution in their own country.

III/7/e. Country information sheets

The project will collect and publish on separate sheets general statistical information of the countries of the Western Balkans including: map, flag, number of inhabitants, size of territory, currency, official language, capital city, phone pre-dial code, GDP data, inhabitants/sqkm², etc. The other side of the sheet will contain description of culinary delights of the Western Balkans countries with recipes and photos of the dishes (one recipe/country).

Info on cultural attractions can also be included.

7 sheets will be produced for the 6 EU member states to be distributed broadly including the bus tour. Format: A/4, two-sided. Language: EN.

Tasks:

Contact points will choose a local food and recipe to include in sheet.

III/7/f. PR materials

PR materials will be distributed widely throughout the project period especially during the bus tour street actions and citizens' consultations to raise its profile and attract the attention of the largest possible number of citizens. This will include among others the production of the following items: posters, notepads, pens, balloons, T-shirts, mugs and mouse pads. None of these items will be on sale.

Tasks:

Project partners assist dissemination of PR materials.

III/7/g. Info package for local and regional mass media

It is of primary importance to reach the largest number of citizens in the region of the project partner countries. Mass media plays a key role in this process. Therefore a special information package will be produced to inform and involve them, asking for their attention and support. It will contain information in local languages about the project in general and about the various possibilities for representatives of mass media (both printed and electronic) to join and inform about the initiative in particular.

Tasks:

Project partners will identify local/national mass media and ask their assistance in promoting/raising the profile of the project.

III/7/h. Concluding publication and DVD

A 7-language printed publication will analyse and summarise the results of the project activities and the opinions, proposals collected during the project period. The synthesis report will be widely distributed in the project countries, with the assistance of Brussels-based European networks and in the 7 Western Balkan countries. A DVD will also be produced containing a 20-minute video on the project focusing on the Enlargement Labyrinth tour and the street actions. The DVD will be distributed to EU Information Offices/Points and Representations of the EC in the 7 Western Balkan countries and local and regional mass media as well.

Tasks:

Project partners will contribute to the content of the final publication and DVD and assist their widest possible dissemination.

III/8. Finances

Under this agenda point European House, the project coordinator gave general information on financial issues. It was followed by a detailed country-specific debate at the end of which common understanding and agreement has been reached including the following elements:

- travel costs (using the most economical means of transportation) are covered from the project budget. Originals of travel documents are to be retained and sent back to European House after travel.
- project-related expenses in all cases must be covered by proper documentation (invoices, etc.).

III/9. AOB

It was underlined that project partner representatives (project partners) should remain the same during the project period to secure personal continuity. The same stands for contact point representatives from the Western Balkans region.

It was agreed that European House

- a. will organise a separate consultation for those who could not attend the kick-off meeting;
- b. with APD (Romania) will investigate the possibility of setting up the Enlargement Labyrinth in Timisoara (Romania) as the country is not part of the bus tour. This is an extra element (costs not included in the project budget).

III/10. Closing

On behalf of the host organisation Miklos Barabas thanked the participants for their creative and active contributions and closed the meeting.

IV. The enlargement policy of the European Union: prospects and misconceptions - international conference - 18 February 2012

As part of the kick-off event a conference was organised and attended by about 60 participants including Hungarian NGOs and the international guests.

Programme

Registration

Introduction, Mr Miklós Barabás, director, European House

Speakers: Mr Miklós Dérer, foreign policy expert, Manfred Wörner Foundation, Ms Stanka Parac, SEE regional programme coordinator, Association of Local Democracy Agencies, Serbia and Mr Hannes Meissner, project manager, The World of NGOs, Austria

Debate

Conclusions, close of conference

Conference summary:

Slowly but steadily

The process of EU enlargement seems to slow but the European dimension remains a principle goal of the Western Balkans region, this is the main finding of an international civil society conference organised in Budapest, Hungary on 18 February 2012 as part of an EU project supported by the Directorate General for Enlargement of the European Commission.

The conference was attended by about 60 civil society representatives from Western Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and from EU member states: Austria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Miklos Derer, research fellow of the Manfred Wörner Foundation, Hungary when placing the question of enlargement in a wider policy setting observed that its importance has decreased over the past few years due to the increasing internal problems the European Union is faced with including the negative affects of the international economic and financial crisis on the common Europe. But the internal crisis of the euro and the European Union general does not mean a halt in the enlargement process, rather a slowing process is expected in which membership could be acquired in more a 10-year average anticipated in earlier rounds of accession. The slowing process bears the possibility of the societies of the Western Balkans being more critical of EU membership.

Stanka Parac, regional director of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (one of the partners of the project) from Subotica, Serbia said that the countries of the Western Balkans has produced serious results in stabilising the region politically and economically in the past fifteen years after the peace agreement of 1995. The role of the European Union is appreciated by citizens in this consolidation process. It would also be important for the countries of the region to see cooperation with a wider scope beyond bilateral processes with the European Union and to cooperate on the regional level too among each other. This should be seen as a natural and moreover logical process. These regional cooperations are assisted e.g. by bilateral programmes of the European Union.

In the coming years an increasing role is expected for civil society organisations especially on the local level to assist cooperation and democracy-building. With the safeguard of its specific cultural traditions and many-faceted identities, respect of human rights the Western Balkans region will prove its capability to live peacefully, which is a precondition of EU membership.

Hannes Meissner, project manager of the Austrian civil society organisation The World of NGOs said that the current project could assist in providing a space for discussion and reach beyond the closer circle of stakeholders to reach a wider audience and public. This would be important to create a positive general anticipation of EU enlargement. The different activities of the project which will last till the end of 2012 will assist this process in the form of street actions with a 100 sqm labyrinth installed at different venues, national citizens' consultations and an internship programme.

The presentations were followed by a vivid exchange of views. Participants raised questions and elaborated on various – mainly civil society – aspects of EU enlargement. The prevailing view was that the project is a good initiative, has an innovative character and indicated their interest to participate in its future programmes.

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