

Programme

ISTANBUL CONGRESS 11 - 12 February 2011

*CSOs challenge public authorities:
From political commitment to active dialogue*



**European Movement
Mouvement Européen**

TÜSEV

Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı
Third Sector Foundation of Turkey

With the support of:





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Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı
Third Sector Foundation of Turkey

10 February 2011

19h00: The Welcome Reception by HE Egemen Bağış, the Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator

The Marmara, Taksim Meydani Taksim 34437 Istanbul

Friday, 11 February

Venue: Istanbul Bilgi University, Dolapdere Campus

08h30 – 09h00: Registrations

09h00 – 10h15: Welcome words and opening speeches

Moderator: Mr Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb, *Belgian Minister of State, Vice-president of the European Movement International, Chair of the Political Committee “The European Union and its Neighbours”*

- **Mr. Üstün Ergüder**, *Chairman of the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey*
- **Prof. Dr. Halil Güven**, *Rector of the Bilgi University*
- **Mr Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu**, *President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), Deputy President of EUROCHAMBRES*

- **Mr Pat Cox**, *President of the European Movement International*
- **Mr Egemen Bağış**, *Turkish Minister for the European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator*
- **Mr Štefan Füle**, *European Commissioner in charge of Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy*

10h15 – 10h45: Questions and Answers session

10h45 – 11h15: COFFEE BREAK

11h15 – 12h00: Plenary Session – Socio-Economic Partnerships

Moderator: Mr Diogo Pinto, *Secretary General of the European Movement International*

- The role of the economic partners in supporting civil society

Mr Bülent Pirler, *Secretary General of the Turkish Employers Confederation (TISK)*

- The benefits for the social partners

Mr Jeff Bridgford, *Special Advisor, European Trade Union Confederation*

- The responsibilities of governments in supporting SEPs

Mr Staffan Nilsson, *President, European Economic and Social Committee*

12h00 – 12h30: Questions and Answers session

12h30 – 14h00: LUNCH



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14h00 – 16h00: Parallel Workshops: **Standards for open government: CSO, public authorities and the theory of democratic governance**

Workshop 1 - Development of civil society

Moderator: Ms Ksenija Milenkovic, *Vice-President of the European Movement International*

Mr Arno Metzler, *Co-President of the Joint Consultative Committee EU-Turkey, European Economic and Social Committee*

Mr Zoran Puljic, *Director, Mozaik Community Development Foundation*

In the region this has been impressive. But is it sufficiently sustainable? With foreign donors tending to move to new areas is there sufficient domestic support to replace their support? Has the issue of civic and citizen engagement in the non-profit sector been addressed? Is there an over concentration on national organizations? What about the local community level? Is there more scope for micro projects? How can we build the local capacities of CSOs in the region?

Workshop 2 – The advocacy and watchdog role.

Moderator: Mr Bernd Hüttemann, *Secretary General, European Movement Germany, Member of the Board of the European Movement International*

Mrs Antonella Valmorbidia, *Chair of the Civil Society and Democracy Committee of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe*

Mr Tony Venables, *Director, European Citizens Action Service*

The experience across the region and within each country can vary. Whilst there are impressive instances of civil society organizations making a major impact on legislation to advance reform processes, there are also instances of where inclusion is an illusion. How to spread best practice more effectively? Can more general standards of civil dialogue be established? What is the role of model guidelines such as those of the Council of Europe or framework agreements (compacts)? What should be done to promote them across the region?

Workshop 3: The process of national reforms.

Moderator: Mr. Gledis Gjipali, *Executive Director, European Movement in Albania*

Mr Basak Ersen, *Programme Director, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey*

Mr Zoran Stojkovski, *Executive Director, Center for Institutional Development - CIRa*

Most countries in the region have now in place a basic legal framework guaranteeing freedom of association, although there is some way to go before associations operating in the human rights area or for the protection of minorities are able to do so without harassment. Less appears to have been done in the area of tax relief and schemes to encourage corporate social responsibility. Legislative reforms are not enough. The workshop should also examine to what extent governments have a cross-cutting strategy towards civil society and the mechanisms to back it up such as focal points, intermediate agencies and regular consultation.

16h00 – 16h30: COFFEE BREAK



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16h30 – 18h30: Parallel Workshops: **CSOs - Structure and local cooperation: networks, regional/international cooperation, how to improve CSO networks?**

Workshop 1 - Networking and coalition building.

Moderator: Momcilo Radulovic, *Secretary General, European Movement in Montenegro*
Ms Cvejtana Plavsca-Matic, *Director, National Foundation for Civil Society Development*
Ms Lidija Topic, *Adviser, Economic and Social Development, Transport and Infrastructure, Building of Human Capital, Parliamentary Cooperation Regional Cooperation Council*

The need for coalition building – both sectoral and cross-sectoral is accepted as necessary to allow civil society organizations to speak with one voice towards the national governments and the EU Institutions. But often the will and resources are lacking. How to overcome the real difficulties in creating coalitions which are open, democratic and also efficient?

Workshop 2 - EU support for civil society.

Moderator: Ms Maja Bobic, *Secretary General, European Movement Serbia*
Mr Dirk Vantghem, *Director International Affairs, Eurochambres*
Mr Henk Visser, *Programme Manager, EU policies, Task Manager, European Commission DG Enlargement*

The Commission has done much to support the development of civil society. But are its financial mechanisms fit for purpose? To what extent does the Commission work with other donors? To what extent have information and consultation mechanisms between the EU and civil society improved? There is no doubt that an alliance between civil society and the European Institutions can help persuade national governments in the region to undertake reforms, but how does this really go in practice?

Workshop 3 - Free movement of people and European exchange programmes with the Region.

Moderator: Mr Olivier Hinnekens, *Treasurer, Member of the Board, European Movement International*
Ms Zeynep Özler, *Senior Researcher, Economic Development Foundation*
Mr Melih Özsöz, *Senior Researcher, Economic Development Foundation*
Mr Kenan Hadzimusic, *Project Manager, IMPACT NGO Office, European Citizens Action Service*

At the Ljubljana Congress of April 2009, the final session with the members of Parliament and government from the region was dominated by the issue of visas, which in the meantime is well on the way to being solved for the Western Balkans. But what about Turkey? The case for visa liberalization will be discussed with the presentation of the results of the IKV—ECAS hotline. This should be seen in the broader context of the different people-to-people programmes, particularly for the younger generation in order to strengthen the links between the EU and applicant countries. There should be a special emphasis on exchanges among CSOs within the region and with host counterparts in the EU.

20h00: Reception: welcome remarks by Mr. Saltuk Ertop, Corporate Affairs & regulations Group Director, Efes Beer Group.



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Saturday, 12 February

Venue: Istanbul Bilgi University, Dolapdere Campus

9h00 – 09h30 *Introductory Speeches on Enlargement and Accession to the EU:*

Moderator: Mr Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb, *Belgian Minister of State, Vice-president of the European Movement International, Chair of the Political Committee “The European Union and its Neighbours”*

- **Mr Lütfi Elvan**, *Turkish Grand National Assembly, Co-Chair of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee*

09h30– 10h30: Presentation of the Political Chart

10h30 – 11h00: COFFEE BREAK

11h00 – 13h00: **Political Debate** *CSOs challenge Public Authorities*

Moderator: Mr Georgi Gotev, *Senior Editor, Euractiv*

- **Mr Halid Genjac**, *Chair of the Joint Committee for European Integration, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- **Mr Neven Mimica**, *Chair of the European Integration Committee, Parliament of Croatia*
- **Mr Onur Öymen**, *Vice-Chair of the EU Committee, Turkish Grand National Assembly*
- **Mr Laszlo Varga**, *Chair of the Committee for the European Integration, Parliament of Serbia*

13h00 – 13h20: *Closing words/ Final Remarks*

- **Mr Pat Cox**, *President of the European Movement International*



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Istanbul Bilgi University



Technical Assistance for
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Socio-Economic Partnerships
Partnership actions between Cultural Organisations
Partnership Actions between Minorities/Vulnerable
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The launching of the Istanbul Congress:

The Civil Society Dialogue from the political commitment to the achievement of the dialogue

In recent years a much greater emphasis has been placed on the vital role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the reform process of candidate and potential candidate countries. While CSOs are key players in promoting a transparent and open participatory democracy, they continue to face numerous obstacles that hinder their development. It is the responsibility of both the national governments as well as of the European institutions to ensure that the role and influence of CSOs is strengthened and rendered as effective as possible.

The aim of this Congress will be to examine how the triangle - civil society development, European perspective, and national reforms - can be made to work more effectively. The emphasis will be on comparing experiences from candidate countries in 6 corresponding workshops.

The Istanbul Congress is a follow-up to the Ljubljana Congress of 16-18 April 2009 which produced a political challenge chart. It was decided on that occasion that the next event involving civil society activities, representatives of the European Institutions and national politicians and civil servants from the candidate countries should be held in Turkey. It is expected that there will be some 300 participants from the host country, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania.

The Congress in Istanbul will intend to determine the most effective means of ensuring a conducive framework and environment to the sustainable development of CSOs in candidate and potential candidate countries. The conference will bring together Civil Society Organisations from Candidates Countries, Members from National Governments and Parliaments and European institutions' representatives.

For this purpose, the first working day will consist in moderated workshops that will bring together CSOs representatives to discuss the biggest challenges facing CSOs today and how to arrive at efficient and sustainable solutions.

The conclusions of the workshops debates will be gathered in a Political Chart that will address the situation of the Civil Society Dialogue in the concerned countries in order to raise CSOs' claims at the highest level and discuss possible solutions with the political representatives that will take part on the second day of debates: *CSOs challenge public authorities.*

The aim of this particular Congress layout is to encourage the Social Dialogue in candidates' countries not only by giving CSOs the opportunity to confront their National Representatives at the Parliament/Government on the challenges they have to face, but also by creating an international framework that can be conducive to positive dialogue and to sharing of best practices between CSOs and Governments of the Region.



CSOs challenge public authorities

From the political commitment to the achievement of the dialogue

WORKSHOPS DEBATES

THEME 1: will look to discuss 'Standards for open government: CSO, public authorities and the theory of democratic governance.' As is stated in the 2009 Ljubljana Declaration, the process of European integration is greatly dictated by the democratic nature of the country and whether or not it adheres to the principles of an open democracy. The past conferences have supported the idea that CSOs can play a key role in promoting democracy and government transparency within their national borders. This specific workshop will invite CSO representatives from the different countries to discuss what has been done and what needs to continue to be done in order to improve CSO-Government dialogue and the mechanisms necessary for establishing a decision-making platform for CSOs.

Themes to be discussed:

- How can the frequency and quality of government – civil society dialogue and cooperation be raised?
 - For CSOs to be treated more evenly by the government (to ensure a more evenly-sided dialogue) it is necessary for them to improve their representation and visibility.
 - How to go about increasing membership within CSOs?
 - How to increase citizen's trust in CSOs?
 - Establishing financial stability
 - Improvements in the legal framework governing operations of all CSOs in Turkey and in the Balkan region. More specifically, enhancing a legal framework that protects the rights of freedom of expression and association of an NGO. Which implementation/concrete achievements?
 - Improving Donor Relations and the Local Philanthropy Sector: it is necessary to create incentives for philanthropy and volunteerism at a local level (in order for CSOs to not have to depend so heavily on foreign aid). Must ensure uniformity of such procedures.
 - Establish a framework for a government strategy for cooperation with civil society
- *Have countries discuss concrete examples of what they have tried, may be a good opportunity in particular for EU member/candidate countries to discuss strategies
- Training CSO in policy dialogue and approaches to develop cooperation with government bodies
 - Which structures or institutional mechanisms to facilitate regular contact and coordination with civil society?
 - Can more general standards of civil dialogue be established?
- *Again, use this opportunity for various participants to provide concrete examples

THEME 2: The structure and sustainability of CSOs is vital in a democratic society and thus must be supported by the governments both in urban and rural settings. In addition to this, one of the prominent issues raised during the Ljubljana conference was that regarding improving the sustainability of CSOs and increasing levels of network and cooperation between them.

This seminar will therefore address the theme 'the role and influence of CSOs at a regional/local level and how to improve CSO cooperation with the governments, while also strengthening internal and international CSOs networks.



Themes to be discussed:

- A variety of consultative mechanisms have been established at the local level unevenly across the Country and their use as a means of government
 - How to ensure correct and an even allocation of state funding.
- How can Europe/and National Governments also help to improve CSOs influence and capacity?
 - Which improvements can be made concerning the legal framework covering the CSO participation in local government?
- The advantages and disadvantages of regional cooperation compared to that with the central government.
- How to increase the cooperation/networking between CSOs and how to facilitate partnerships (on cross-cutting issues):
 - Support and provide capacity assistance to networks and umbrella organizations
 - This means building and improving the local capacities of CSOs by looking for new/innovative means of funding, while also increasing membership/visibility to ensure greater representation and long-term sustainability.
 - Develop on-line databases of project outputs and outcomes
- The freedom of movement – question of visas

Limited structure of civil society support organizations, lack of organizations specializing in CSO and civil society capacity building.