

FINANCING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN UNION STANDARDS IN ACCESSION PROCESS

Lejla Gačanica

INITIATIVE FOR MONITORING
THE EU INTEGRATION OF
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

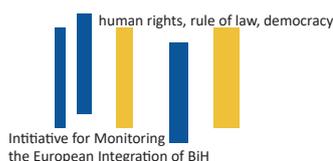
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Author: Lejla Gačanica

Editor: Rasim Ibrahimagić

Proofreading: Jasenka Kapetanović

Design/layout: Lejla Huremović

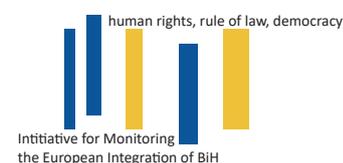
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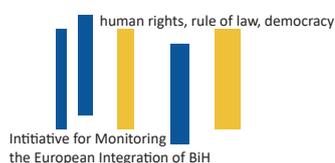
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CS	Civil society
CSF	Civil Society Facility
CSO	Civil society organization
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
P2P	People 2 People
RS	Republika Srpska



INTRODUCTION

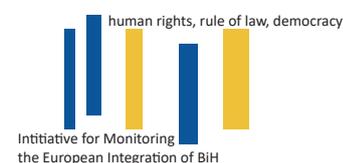
About a set of policy papers on funding CSOs and its impact:

The aim of the set of papers (two policy papers) is to explore the role of civil society organizations in policymaking in the context of EU accession – whether and how civil society organizations prioritize the EU accession process, especially what the EU itself finances here when the EU integration process is at stake. The first paper (Financing Civil Society Organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina according to European Union Standards in Accession Process) addresses the funding practices to date, while in the second (The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina in EU Policy Making in the Context of the Accession Process), the effects of the funded projects are linked to the accession process, especially regarding the accession priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in established discourse emerges as a *corrective* to the official authority and policies. However, CSOs have a more complex role to play in the European Union (EU) accession process. They represent a partner and a contributor within the EU agenda and strong implementer of the key policies and strategies. CSOs can serve as valuable agents of change, and enlargement countries face a range of challenges, especially in fields such as the rule of law, corruption, organized crime, the economy and social cohesion.¹ At same time, the involvement of CSOs in the pre-accession process can contribute to deepening citizens' understanding of the reforms a country needs to complete in order to qualify for the EU membership.

The focus of this paper is on the role played by CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) through EU funding programs and policies. It has been often repeated in the EU's official statements and reports that: "an empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system and should be recognized and treated as such by the state institutions".² Still, in terms of understanding how empowerment as well as the work of CSOs, through different funding options provided by the EU, impact and contribute to enlargement processes, it is necessary to observe what has been financed and how, and what are the results of it. The EU puts emphasis on the engagement of civil society in the integration process and the role of CSOs in a democratic society in general: the Western Balkan governments are required to involve civil society actors in the necessary reforms through consultations and as monitors of their implementation.³

One of the European Commission's (EC) declared aims for countries aspiring to join the EU is the empowerment of CSOs throughout the accession process. This was a lesson learned from the previous enlargement toward Central and Eastern Europe



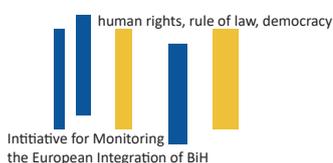
1 *DG Enlargement Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/civil_society/doc_guidelines_cs_support.pdf (accessed on: 21.12.2019).

2 Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina and European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, https://europa.ba/?page_id=676 (access 21.12.2019.).

3 Juzova, J. *Civil society and the EU integration process: Key importance, little impact?* Available at: <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2019/09/11/civil-society-and-the-eu-integration-process-key-importance-little-impact/> (accessed on: 20.12.2019).

(Eastern Enlargement⁴), which was dominated by executive actors and saw partial implementation of the adopted reforms. EC has sought to strengthen the involvement of CSOs in political processes by building their internal capacities and fostering an enabling environment for their operation. Nevertheless, EC struggles to move beyond a purely instrumental use of civil society empowerment.⁵

In BiH, there are EU programs dedicated to CSOs. It is noticeable that the data on these programs as well as the allocation and reporting on their implementation are mostly transparent and accessible. The question, however, is the extent to which the programs implemented so far truly meet the goals set out in the strategic programs and documents, and how broadly these goals are in line with the priorities in which CSOs are expected to be true actor in the pre-accession process.



4 The so-called Eastern enlargement in 2004-2007 when twelve countries, out of which 10 were new democracies, joined the EU.

5 Wunsch, N. *Right Goals, Wrong Tools? Civil Society Empowerment in the EU Accession Process*. Available at: <https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/right-goals-wrong-tools> (accessed on: 20.12.2019).

1. ROLE OF CSOs IN THE (PRE)ACCESSION PROCESS

CSOs are perceived to be an evidence of democracy and good governance at work because they allow citizens to freely associate and engage in civic action.⁶ In terms of political requirements for the EU, democracy is probably the basic principle which is in countries like BiH, which went through political, economic and social transition, still in progress. Having that in mind, understanding CSOs as active stakeholders means an inclusive and participatory approach that would ultimately contribute to real progress of the state.

The EU has two sets of instruments (political and financial) to implement its civil society (CS) strategy.⁷ Regarding the political support, the aim is to encourage enlargement countries to make legislation more conducive for CS and to promote the involvement of CS in the pre-accession process. There is crucial rhetoric support derived from the regular reviews of CS by the state in each candidate country's annual Progress report.⁸ Regarding the financial support, funding is available through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and Civil Society Facility (CSF), created in 2008 by the European Commission to provide financial support for the development of civil society. These instruments incorporate mechanisms to educate, socialize and transfer expertise in order to help countries in the application and enforcement of the EU legislation, as well as enabling the distribution of the EU best practices.⁹

From the EU position, the involvement of CS in the pre-accession process is regarded as also as a means to deepen citizens' understanding of the reforms a country needs to complete in order to qualify for the EU membership.¹⁰ In this context, the EU civil society promotion strategy has two main goals: achieving an environment that is conducive to CS activities and building the capacity of CSOs to be effective and accountable independent actors. In addition to this domestic agenda, the EU is also committed to ensuring that CSOs in the candidate countries are able to aggregate the key societal interests and channel them to decision-makers at the EU level, in order to facilitate the involvement of civil society actors in the EU consultative mechanisms.¹¹ The EU *Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy* (11855/12) emphasizes that effective

6 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement*, available at: <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/civil-society-and-eu-enlargement/> (accessed on: 20.12.2019).

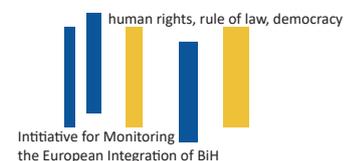
7 Ibid.

8 Progress Report is an instrument by which the European Commission presents a detailed assessment of the state of play in each candidate country and potential candidate, what has been achieved over the last year, and set out guidelines on reform priorities. This report is published once a year.

9 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement*.

10 According to Wunsch: "This can help ensure EU accession is not just a government exercise and stimulate a balanced public debate, which is crucial to achieving a well-informed decision on EU membership at the end of the pre-accession process".

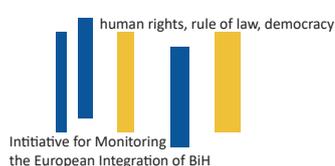
11 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement*.



engagement with CS is a cornerstone of a successful human rights policy.¹²

The EU's policy on civil society is based on the *Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries*.¹³ These contain a set of objectives, results and indicators developed for the EU support to CS and allow the measuring of progress at country level, as well as across the enlargement region. The Guidelines are developed for the period of 2014 – 2020.¹⁴ The Guidelines objectives include: enabling legal and policy environment for the exercise of the rights of freedom, expression, assembly and association; enabling financial environment, which supports sustainability of CSOs; CSOs and public institutions working in partnership through dialogue and cooperation, based on willingness, trust and mutual acknowledgment around common interests; capable, transparent and accountable CSOs; effective and financially sustainable CSOs. The objectives are accompanied by benchmarks, as a standard or reference point. Benchmarks related to *Changing relations CSOs and government* set of objectives include, for example, the data on the draft laws/bylaws consulted in accordance with the national legislation is available on the annual level, or 80 % of laws/ bylaws, strategies and policy reforms are effectively consulted with CSOs. Objectives related to *CSOs Capacities* include benchmarks: 80 % of the general population believes that NGOs support dealing with problems in their country; 80 % of CSOs state that they are able to fundraise at least 70 % of their strategic plan; sources of income of 80 % of CSOs are derived from 3 different sources, out of which none of the sources constitutes more than 50 % of the CSOs income (sources of funding are: public sources, government/ministries/state administration bodies, and local and/ or regional administration, the EU funds, other FOREIGN private or public sources e.g. embassies, members, citizens, private companies operating in the country, public companies, own economic activity).¹⁵

According to the EU financed *2016 Mapping Study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, there are 22,601 registered associations and foundations.¹⁶ According to data from 2019, BiH has 25, 311 CSOs, while 19, 955 are active.¹⁷ The share of activities of CSOs in the total GDP in BiH in 2014 amounted to 0.68 %.¹⁸ The EU is the biggest donor to BiH, currently



- 12 *EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy*, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf (accessed on: 19.12.2019).
- 13 *Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014 2020*, available at: <http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Guidelines-for-EU-support-to-civil-society-in-enlargement-countries-2014-2020.pdf> (access 25.12.2019.).
- 14 Guidelines outlines that „objectives in the guidelines cannot be achieved in the period of 6 years, since the realization of objectives includes legislative changes and their proper implementation”.
- 15 *Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014 2020*.
- 16 The registration of associations and foundations in BiH is done in 18 registry offices and presented data are collected from 17 registry offices.
- 17 Source: draft *Regional Assessment on the State of the Enabling Environment and Capacities of Civil Society against the Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in Enlargement countries, 2014-2020*.
- 18 Žeravčić, G. *Mapping Study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, available at: <http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping-study-of-CSOs-in-BiH.pdf> (access 21.12.2019.).

th over 200 contracts under implementation covering a wide range of sectors.¹⁹

Despite the continuous (financial) support from EU, *Bosnia and Herzegovina Analytical Report 2018*²⁰ shows that there is no strategic (government) framework for cooperation with civil society.²¹ It seems that CS is still perceived as a separate part in the implementation of reforms and the overall functioning of the pre-accession process.

Another important contextual issue is the current position of enlargement politics, especially since French non-paper from November 2019.²² The new EU enlargement policy is expected by beginning of 2020,²³ and it remains to be seen what this will mean for the Western Balkans countries, including BiH. The disagreement among member states on the path to reform could prolong the detrimental blockade of the Western Balkans' perspective for entering the EU.²⁴ Already back in 2015, it was noted that enthusiasm within the EU for enlargement is declining as the EU faces difficulties both on the economic front and in terms of uneven member state performance.²⁵

19 Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina/EU Special Representative: EU Funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, available at: <http://projects.europa.ba/About> (access 21.12.2019.).

20 *Analytical Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership of the European Union*, SWD(2019) 222 final, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-bosnia-and-herzegovina-analytical-report.pdf> (access 21.12.2019.).

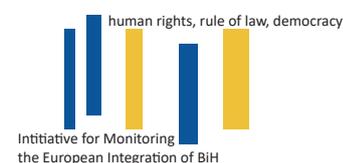
21 Report further states: "There has been no significant follow-up to the signature of the Charter on Cooperation between the Council of Ministers and civil society organisations in November 2017. The Council of Ministers needs to operationalise the Charter provisions including by developing regular cooperation and consultations with civil society organisations. Not all institutions at all levels of government have designated specific bodies or contact points in charge of dialogue and cooperation with civil society organisations. Sector-specific consultations are organised occasionally through dedicated working groups".

22 At an EU summit in October 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron prevented EU leaders from formally opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania over concerns that the process for becoming an EU member was in need of fundamental reform. France has put forth a new plan to radically overhaul the EU's enlargement mechanism. Under the French proposal, there would be a new, seven-stage process, with "stringent conditions in order to effectively converge towards European norms and standards," plus a "reversibility" component, allowing the EU to abandon membership talks if a candidate country's government backslides away from the bloc's standards. See more: <https://euobserver.com/enlargement/146624> (accessed on: 25.12.2019).

23 It is expected that European Commission presents its own proposal for a reform of the accession process in January 2020, which will then serve as a basis for further discussion.

24 Töglhofer, T. *No Time to Lose for the EU Overcoming the Accession Stalemate in the Western Balkans*, available at: <https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/no-time-lose-eu> (accessed on: 20.12.2019).

25 Wunsch, N. *Right Goals, Wrong Tools? Civil Society Empowerment in the EU Accession Process*.



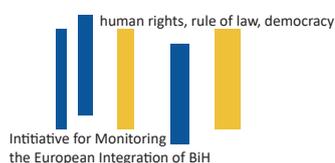
2. EU PROGRAMS FOR CSOs IN BIH

Through the financial support in BiH, the EU finances the work of CSOs in certain areas. The EU, in particular *IPA II program Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019*, states that it seeks to empower the civil society to fulfil the following key roles:

- **Creating stronger links to citizens** by engaging in public policy processes, reaching out to society as a whole including marginalized groups and grass-root communities and encouraging civic activism and public participation in policy-making across all areas;
- Becoming **professional and reliable partners in the policy-making and reform process** through evidence-based advocacy across all sectors and close monitoring of reforms;
- Contributing to **enhancing responsible and inclusive leadership** in the political, economic and social spheres and providing an early warning in case of societal change,
- Strengthening economic development and creating **better links with business** by promoting entrepreneurship, social innovation and job creation.²⁶

As previously mentioned, the two main financial supports are available for CSOs (focus in further text will be entirely on CSOs): IPA and CSF. In the case of **IPA**, its current programme is running until 2020 and incorporates performance indicators aimed at assessing whether the expected results have been achieved. “In this manner, the EU has been able to exercise a substantial influence over the socio-economic and political systems of the countries of CEE. This offers an excellent illustration of the EU’s role as a normative soft power: it is able to diffuse its norms of democracy, open market and defence of human rights by submitting them to membership, but also making explicit requirements about what kind of institutions or actors may be best placed to implement such norms”²⁷

The **CSF**’s strategy is to support local capacity building, intended to reach grassroots organizations; to support capacity-building and knowledge growth for governments, the EU institutions and counterparts, including through visit programmes such as ‘People to People’; to support the creation of space for cooperation between civil society and government; and to support partnership actions and networks between CSOs in all beneficiary countries and with EU partners.²⁸ Additionally, **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)**²⁹ is also available, as support civil



26 *IPA II program Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/ipa_ii_2018-040-646.03_2019-040-647.03-csfmedia-bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf (accessed on: 21.12.2019).

27 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement*.

28 *Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/csf_evaluation_report_wbt_dig.pdf (accessed on: 22.12.2019).

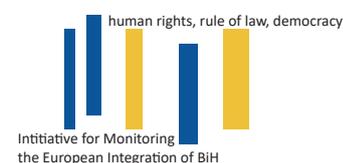
29 In 2014, the European Parliament and the Council adopted *Regulation (EU) No 235/2014*

society to become an effective force for political reform and defence of human rights.³⁰

2.1. Programs

The following is an overview of the EU programs available to CSOs in BiH, together with main data on the allocated funds and evaluation.

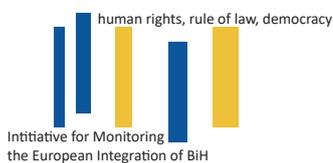
Name	Bilateral IPA II 2014-2020	Civil Society Facility (CSF)	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
Description	Aims to prepare potential and candidate countries for assuming and effectively implementing obligations of its future membership in the EU. IPA replaces the five previous EU instruments for pre-accession – Phare, ISPA, SAPARD, the Turkey programme, and CARDS.	This initiative foresees support both at national and multi-beneficiary levels and consists of three strands, which together aim to strengthen civil society's role in the democratic process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance (TACSO) to civic and capacity-building initiatives to enforce the role of civil society; 	EIDHR is a thematic funding instrument for EU external action aiming to support projects in the area of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy in non-EU countries. Following up on the 2007-2013 EIDHR, it has been established in 2014 to contribute to achieving the EU's policies relating to human rights and



establishing a financing instrument for democracy and human rights worldwide for the period 2014-20, replacing and building upon the EIDHR (2007-2013) and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (2000-2006).

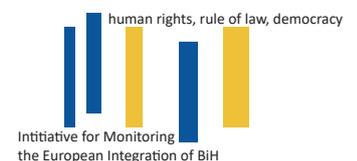
30 International Cooperation and Development: European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR), available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm_en (accessed on: 22.12.2019).

	<p>IPA provides targeted and effective support according to the needs of a country. In particular, IPA helps strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, reform public administration, carry out economic reforms, promote respect for human as well as minority rights and gender equality, support the development of civil society and advance regional co-operation, and contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.</p> <p>³¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a People 2 People Programme (P2P) supporting visits to EU institutions and bodies to exchange experience, know-how and good practices between beneficiaries, EU and Member States CSOs • Partnership Actions carried out between beneficiary and EU CSOs, leading to a transfer of know-how and the realization of innovative trans-national projects. 	<p>democracy in non-EU countries, including the objectives outlined in the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the Council on 2012 and its new Action Plan for 2015-2019.</p> <p>It offers independence of action, as it cooperates directly with human rights defenders and local CSOs without the need for approval of national authorities. It has the ability to address sensitive political issues (such as death penalty, torture, freedom of expression in restrictive contexts, discriminations against vulnerable groups) and can respond to emerging and complex challenges, due to its high flexibility</p>
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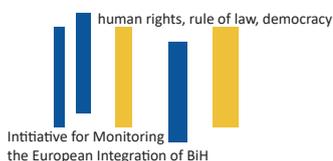
31 European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations: Bosnia and Herzegovina - financial assistance under Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II (IPA II), available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/bosnia-herzegovina_en (accessed on: 21.12.2019).

	<p>The following areas will be in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the effectiveness and accountability of the public sector, based on the principles of good governance and improving of macro-economic and fiscal planning and management; 		<p>in terms of implementation modalities.</p> <p>³²The key objectives of the EIDHR are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting, developing and consolidating democracy in third countries, by enhancing participatory and representative democracy, strengthening the overall democratic cycle, in particular by reinforcing an active role for civil society within this cycle, and the rule of law, and improving the reliability of electoral processes, in particular by means of EU Electoral Observation Missions; • enhancing respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as proclaimed in the UN Universal
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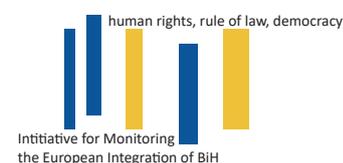
32 International Cooperation and Development: European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the independence, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the justice sector and law enforcement institutions including fight organised crime and corruption; • Support socio-economic development with a focus on: employment, harmonised social policies, access to better and inclusive education, the social and economic inclusion of the most vulnerable, development of the private sector (in particular of SMEs) and improving living conditions in rural areas; and • Supporting infrastructure, notably in the transport 		Human Rights and other international and regional human rights instruments, and strengthening their protection, promotion, implementation and monitoring, mainly through support to relevant CSOs, human rights defenders and victims of repression and abuse. ³³
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33 Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina: European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), available at: https://europa.ba/?page_id=682 (accessed on: 21.12.2019).

	and environment sectors, which BiH can finance and manage to operate and maintain.		
Value	funds for the Civil Society Facility: € 9.1 million	For the period 2011-12 the CSF has a budget of EUR 40 million. By 2016: € 130,821,066, (BiH: € 12,914,470) ³⁴	EUR 1,332,752,000 for 2014-2020 (increase of approximately 21% compared to the 2007-2013 budget) ³⁵
In BiH	- Since 2007 The total value of the EU's financial assistance to BiH through IPA funds for the period 2007-2013 amounts to approximately 594 million EUR. For the IPA programming period 2014-2020 the situation is different. As the assistance is no longer organised by components, BiH as a potential candidate country, can profit from the same assistance as the candidate countries. ³⁶	CSF funding in numbers: EUR 2.1 million in 2014, EUR 2.5 million in 2015, EUR 4.5 million in 2017, EUR 2 million in 2018, EUR 6 million in 2019 and EUR 2 million in 2020. Civil Society Facility and Media action programme 2018-2019 with financial assistance from the Instrument for PreAccession 2018/2019: overall indicative amount made available under this call	CSOs and human rights defenders in BiH are eligible to apply for calls for proposals launched through the worldwide component of the programme. ³⁷ In BiH it was supporting projects which were selected through a call for proposal published at www.europa.ba in different areas, for example support to women victims of war, support to Roma marginalised communities, support to youth employment,



34 Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey.
 35 International Cooperation and Development: European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR).
 36 Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina/EU Special Representative: EU Funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
 37 Please see: https://europa.ba/?page_id=682

In BiH	BiH must develop country-wide sector strategies in order to access funds. For this reason it is not possible to say exactly how much of the funds BiH will use – it will depend on the number of strategies produced. This assistance is managed by the EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina.	for proposals is EUR 5, 500, 000 (allocated EUR 4 million by the end of 2019 – 9 projects).	asupport to LGBTI, and many others. ³⁸ Grant awarded during December 2018: EUR 900, 000.00 Grant awarded during December 2016 and February 2017: EUR 1, 693, 573.68 Grant awarded during 2015: EUR 941,792
Evaluation	Yes	Yes, available	Yes, available

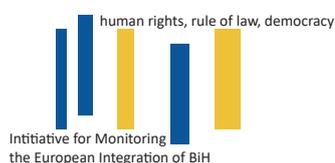
2.2. BiH Overview

So far, over 25 million euros have been invested through EU programs in BiH and funded projects related to building the capacities of CS to actively take part in policy dialogue, reinforce local democracy and strengthen civil society organizations to fight corruption and protect the environment. Over the 2007-2018 period, BiH received EUR 1.5 billion from the EU in general.³⁹ Data on calls and awarded projects are available, as well as some evaluation and monitoring results.

According to EUD database for projects⁴⁰, ending with 2012,⁴¹ 48 projects were financed in BiH as follows:⁴²

Rule of Law and fundamental rights: 23 projects in total EUR 4,615,517

- Environment: 13 projects in total EUR 1,749,058



- 38 Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina/EU Special Representative: EU Funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- 39 *Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership of the European Union*, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-bosnia-and-herzegovina-opinion.pdf> (accessed on: 20.12.2019).
- 40 See more: <http://projects.europa.ba>.
- 41 Disclaimer for this database states: "The information given on this site is aggregated from relevant contracts managed by the Delegation of the EU to Bosnia and Herzegovina and is presented in an indicative and illustrative format for the purpose of general public awareness and information. It cannot therefore be construed as a legally binding or exhaustive account of all EU financial assistance to BiH and may not be quoted as such."
- 42 Please consult table above for overall data for each funding programme (section *In BiH*).

- Regional and territorial cooperation: 3 in total EUR 150,279
- Agriculture and rural development: 2 in total EUR 480,462
- Education, employment and social policies: 6 in total EUR 1,357,360

Besides financing CSOs, the EU opened a consultation process with CSOs in preparation of the EU annual reports on country progress, which will be more elaborated in the following paper. But, what is still visible is the discrepancy between government and the role/impact of CSOs even through the EU funded projects. This is noticeable in almost all sectors where progress in accession process is registered. The EU integration process will be a major challenge for BiH with a particular role for CSOs, including enabling environment for CSOs.

In *Revised Indicative Strategy Paper (2014-2020) for Bosnia and Herzegovina* it is emphasized that “further support is needed to leverage on the expert knowledge of civil society (including business community, media, and social partners) in specific sectors to shape policy and strategy, as well as to enable change”.⁴³ EC plans to offer a combination of political and financial support⁴⁴ to meet these objectives and will advocate for a more conducive legislative framework for civil society. It will also promote the involvement of civil society in the pre-accession process, including in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of sector strategies.⁴⁵

2.3. Reporting and evaluating

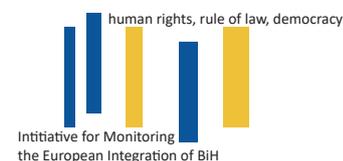
EC is using monitoring and evaluating as instruments to track how actions (projects/ programmes) are implemented, to improve their design, efficiency and accountability. Monitoring uses systematic data collection on specified indicators to provide the management and the main stakeholders of an on-going intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. It can be internal (performed by the Commission staff or implementing partners, such as agency staff, government personnel, other donors, non-state actors (private sector companies, NGOs, etc.)) or external (Results Oriented Monitoring).⁴⁶ Evaluation is systematic and objective assessment of the on-going or completed interventions (actions/policies), their design, implementation and results according

43 *ANNEX to the COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION amending Commission Decision C(2014) 9495 of 15.12.2014 adopting the Indicative Strategy Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2014-2020*, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180817-revised-indicative-strategy-paper-2014-2020-for-bosnia-and-herzegovina.pdf> (accessed on: 21.12.2019).

44 Civil society will be supported through the IPA multi-beneficiary Civil Society Facility complementary to the support provided under the national CSF and EIDHR and Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) financing.

45 *ANNEX to the COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION amending Commission Decision C(2014) 9495 of 15.12.2014 adopting the Indicative Strategy Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2014-2020*.

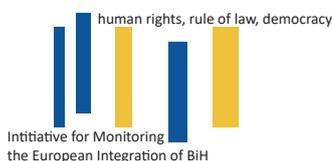
46 European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Monitoring and Evaluation, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/monitoring-and-evaluation_en (accessed on: 22.12.2019).



to the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, coherence and EU added-value. It assesses how well a specific measure has worked (or is working) and whether it is still justified or should be changed.⁴⁷

DG Enlargement Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries 2014-2020 envisage four specific mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation on different levels: yearly monitoring of indicators with CSOs (national and regional meetings will analyse the development of the CSOs in all countries), coordinated systems for monitoring of grants will be developed by each contracting authority, mid-term evaluation of the Enlargement support to CSOs and final evaluation.

Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey contains data related to BiH. Some of the major conclusions in evaluation are: CSF has been a relevant instrument to respond to the engagement of civil society in response to the enlargement requirements; CSF is a relevant mechanism to support strategic guidance towards establishing a structured dialogue between CSOs, governments, operating structures and the EU; it is difficult to assess the actual achievements of the CSF overall due to the lack of a systematic intervention logic and indicators; in the absence of official coordination regarding civil society, the EUD and USAID, as key donors, maintain close cooperation and exchange on issues pertaining to support; CSF processes of call for proposals, assessment, award and contracting can create a disconnect between project design and the real situation on the ground at the time of award; main results of CSF support are visible in the extent to which CSO capacities, skills, outreach and structures have been improved; there are still challenges in building partnerships with national authorities, although this is more attributable to the authorities themselves than to the projects funded by the CSF; CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations; single biggest challenge to the CSF is in addressing the implementation of the enabling environment for CSOs – whilst project level impacts are visible, the broader impact of CSF funding in BiH is less strong; priorities of governments are heavily focused on survival and actions related to power rather than governance which negatively affects impacts of capacity building of CSOs; lack of commitment on the part of governments to an enabling environment; there is a developing *clientelism* in government processes that impacts on the view the wider society has of CSOs, and detracts from civil society effectiveness; donor involvement is shrinking, leaving the EU as the main donor in the country; potential for sustainability is most notable on the organisational side, particularly the noted improvements in the ability of organisations to think, plan and act strategically; more of a formal, rather than substantive commitment to human rights and gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation;⁴⁸ sustainability of CSF actions in BiH remains fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF will face difficulties in producing effects after projects close; cooperation between



⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ The focus on human rights in the CSF for BiH is strong; however, the focus on gender seems to be more declarative than essential. The focus on the environment has been positive.

the CSF, Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) and EIDHR and some sectoral support instruments can be further developed; the assistance of the EU to national reform processes is not well understood and that there remains a lack of relevant information in the community.⁴⁹ It is necessary to emphasize that CS should be regarded as a cross-cutting issue and not as separate sector.

Another identified challenge for BiH is the possibility of using CSF funds because of co-financing requirement: CSF has been a request for 10% co-financing by the applicant(s) or beneficiary of the project.⁵⁰ The implementation of this principle in practice has proved to be one of key challenges faced by CSOs and beneficiaries (larger, more established, and smaller, grassroots organisations). For some organisations, co-financing presents a difficulty in terms of access to IPA CSF as well as other EU funding. In BiH, this is the single most important reason reported by organisations for not applying for CSF grants.⁵¹

Also, CSOs are facing a challenge in the EU funding related to inconsistency in setting priorities through new programs, which considerably undermines not only the continuation of work in certain areas, but also the overall retention of results achieved through previous projects.⁵²

What is necessary here, in the context of BiH in the pre-accession phase, and what is actually missing is a systematic review of EU civil society promotion strategies in the context of enlargement. The official evidence of whether the goals outlined above have been met is fragmented and can be drawn mainly from the European Commission's Progress reports on each candidate country.⁵³ There is also a lack of structural approach to priorities, which in fact prevents the actual impact of CSOs on the overall process.

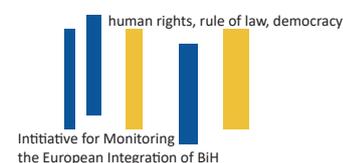
49 *Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey.*

50 In certain cases 20% was required as well as no co-financing segment.

51 *Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey.*

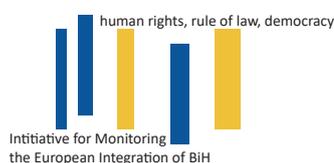
52 As an example: Only in 2014, through the efforts of the non-governmental sector, de-institutionalisation was included as a priority field in the Action Plan, which emerged from the Indicative Strategic Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014-2017 for IPA. For the first time funds for de-institutionalisation in the amount of one million euros were allocated, however, they are insufficient to achieve any significant result. Furthermore, when preparing the sector planning document for the sector „Employment with Education and Social Policy“ for IPA II, this field has been completely left out, bringing into question the sustainability of those results achieved with the 2014 IPA funds. See more: *Alternative Answers off Civil Society Organizations to the European Commission Questionnaire* (question 242).

53 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement.*



CONCLUSION

While the “political and socio-economic context is very complex and affects civil society significantly”⁵⁴, there will be limited progress in terms of expectation of what CSOs should be and/or do in the pre-accession process in BiH. It should be addressed how priorities have been established but also how monitoring and evaluation works when it comes to operationalization of thematic funded areas. Significantly, the problem of the environment in which CSOs operate and of dysfunctional co-operation with government is constantly being repeated – this greatly diminishes the potential for progress, not only of CS, but also of participatory democracy. Models of the EU’s support to CSOs in the pre-accession process sometimes show that “achievements derived from these initiatives remain modest and that there is evidence of variation across countries, as the EU’s influence has had a differentiated impact on diverse national environments.”⁵⁵ The weakness of CS may even have been perpetuated through financial dependencies and the demanding criteria established by the EU institutions in order to engage CSOs in regular consultation.⁵⁶ Not only settings of areas of funding priorities (as areas where certain improvement is expected and needed), which should be more carefully designed bearing in mind long term goals and previous results, but also complementary mechanisms (such as consultations) need to be created in real context, instead of becoming a reference to improve consultation structures, but civil society organisations remain constrained by their domestic environments, the dominance of national level identities and a lack of sufficient resources to engage in transnational activities.⁵⁷ Instruments for supporting CSOs in mission to increase CSOs participation in policy processes are the key to ensuring inclusive and effective policies,⁵⁸ and they must be adequate to needs in BiH context.



54 *IPA II program Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019.*

55 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement.*

56 Pérez-Solórzano, N. *Civil Society and EU Enlargement.*

57 *Ibid.*

58 *The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations*, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM%3A2012%3A0492%3AFIN%3AEN%3APDF> (accessed on: 20.11.2019).

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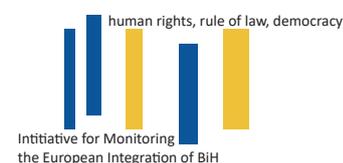
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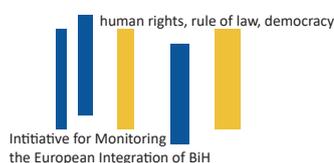
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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The Initiative for Monitoring the European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an informal coalition of forty civil society organisations which contributes to monitoring the reforms and oversees the implementation of policies, rights and standards of the European Union, focusing on the issues of democratisation, rule of law, and human and minority rights. Learn more about the Initiative at: <http://eu-monitoring.ba/o-inicijativi/>.

Active member organisations:

Aarhus Centre in BiH, Sarajevo
Association for Democratic Initiatives, Sarajevo
Association Network for Building Peace, Sarajevo
Association Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance, Sarajevo
Balkan Investigative Reporting Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo
BH Journalists, Sarajevo
Centre for Investigative Reporting, Sarajevo
Centre for Political Studies, Sarajevo
Civil Society Promotion Centre, Sarajevo
Forum ZDF, Sarajevo
Foundation 787, Sarajevo
Foundation Cure, Sarajevo
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Banja Luka
Hope and Homes for Children, Sarajevo
Kali Sara – Roma Information Centre, Sarajevo
Land of Children, Tuzla
MyRight – Empowers People with Disabilities, Sarajevo
Oštra Nula, Banja Luka
Sarajevo Open Centre, Sarajevo
Transparency International in BiH, Banja Luka/Sarajevo
TRIAL International, Sarajevo
Vaša prava BiH (Your Rights BiH), Sarajevo
Women to Women, Sarajevo
Youth Centre Kwart, Prijedor
Youth Initiative for Human Rights in BiH, Sarajevo
Zašto ne (Why Not), Sarajevo

Coordinators of the Initiative:

Sarajevo Open Centre
info@eu-monitoring.ba

Supporting organisations:

ACIPS, Sarajevo; Association of Students of Tuzla University's Faculty of Law; Banja Luka Association of Queer Activists (BUKA), Banja Luka; Centre for Socio-Ecological Development, Banja Luka; Human Rights Centre of the University of Sarajevo; Crvena (Red), Sarajevo; European Research Centre, Sarajevo; Green Council, Sarajevo; Infohouse, Sarajevo; OKC Abrašević, Mostar; Perpetuum mobile, Banja Luka; Association PEKS, Tuzla; Vesta, Tuzla; Foreign Policy Initiative BiH, Sarajevo; Green Neretva, Konjic.

