



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
AGENCY FOR THE SUPPORT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

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12 - 15 June 2014

Prague, Czech Republic

The European Roma Pride Preparatory Meeting organized by “The European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM)”

In the framework of consolidation of ASCS cooperation with international partners, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Mr. Adrian Thano, Board member Mr. Aldo Merkoçi and the Executive Director of ASCS, Mr. Andi Kananaj, participated in this meeting.

The goal of this meeting was to prepare Anti-Racist and Roma community organizations, from all across Europe for this autumn “Roma Pride” activity, by bringing together the main leaders of these NGOs from 25 countries, to coordinate their work for the preparation of this autumn “Roma Pride” event.

The “Roma Pride” activity is a European-wide annual event. It takes place simultaneously in 10 to 15 countries, and they work to expand it every year.

“The Roma Pride” is a mobilization of the society for the defense of Roma people’s dignity and rights. It aims to condemn discrimination against the Roma community, promote equality, and protect Roma culture.

One of the values of “The Roma Pride” activity is that, it will be organized by a coalition of Roma community organizations and anti-racist or human rights NGOs.

18 June 2014

Pristina, Republic of Kosova

Regional conference organized by the "Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organizations Project (TACSO)"

Executive Director of ASCS, Mr. Andi Kananaj and Supervisory Board member of ASCS, Mr. Ismail Ademi took part in the regional conference under the title "Improving the Legal and Institutional Framework for Public Finance". The focus and goal of this conference was to contribute to the improvement of mechanisms, legal and procedural aspects of public funding in relation with the financial support to civil society organizations in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

30 May - 30 June 2014

Call for Project-Proposals No. 5

Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), in the context of an open and transparent competition, based on the criteria set forth by Law no. 10093, dated 09.03.2009, "On the organization and functioning of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society", from 30 May to 30 June 2014 opened No.5 Call for proposals for NGOs that operate across the country. This Call was focused on the following main areas:

1. Good governance and the rule of law (fight against corruption, impunity, etc.);
2. Strengthening the institution of tolerance and dialogue as the fundamental values of democracy (human rights, combating violence and discrimination, diversity as value and as an asset to a democratic society);
3. Environmental protection and sustainable development (tourism, public health, schools, etc.);
4. Strengthening the capacities of the young generation through free enterprise initiatives;
5. Promotion and management of cultural heritage;
6. Strengthening the cooperation and partnership between civil society organizations; strengthening the capacities of the organizations; encouraging civil society involvement in policy-making and decision-making;

During this call there were an increased number of applications compared with the previous calls. The number of applications filed with the ASCS reached 245 applications, about 121 applications more than those in the previous call, which had a geographical spread across the country.

Factors that contributed positively to achieving this outcome, have been the facilitated procedures of application and also the orientation sessions organized by the staff of ASCS, where a large number of interested organizations were provided with information on how to fill the application form and all the other documentation. The large number of applications is an indicator that shows an increased reliability of civil society in cooperation with the ASCS.

After the inspection of the documents and the evaluation of the applications filed with the ASCS, the Supervisory Board declared the list of winning projects which were followed by the conclusion of the contracts.

11 August - 10 September 2014

Open Call for Project-Proposals No. 6

Following its work and the fulfillment of the mission, the Agency for the Support of Civil Society, to support non-profit organizations in their work to realize their mission, launched Call No. 6, for the distribution of the remaining part of the grant, dedicated to civil society.

The main focuses of this Call are the following areas:

1. Increasing the impact and involvement of civil society in the drafting and approval processes of policy / public reforms;
2. Good governance, strengthening of the institutions, society and the dialogue, youth empowerment through basic values of democracy (participation, human rights, rule of law, culture, etc.);
3. Protecting the environment, regional development, economic and sustainable development (cultural heritage, tourism, public services and innovation etc.);
4. Increasing of the public influence and the activity of Civil Society Organizations, networking and cooperation within the European Union harmonization and cooperation / regional development;
5. The creation and consolidation of civil society skills in public communication and civic education, encouragement of citizens to activities, involvement of their participation in community development.

Milan, 17 - 18 September 2014

Signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between ASCS - CELIM for the Region of Lombardy



In the context of strengthening the relationship of the ASCS with the foreign countries, the Executive Director Mr. Andi Kananaj together with the Supervisory Board member Mr. Ismail Ademi, who follows the cooperation with Italy, have developed a two-days visit to the city of Milan, Lombardy Region, where do live more than 100 thousand Albanians, and which is the most advanced region in terms of development of the third sector and civil society.

The invitation for this visit came from the Italian SCO- CELIM, which, for more than 50 years is active in Italy and for at least 10 years has significant activities and projects both in Albania and in Kosovo. In the context of the closing conference of the project "Albania Domani", funded by the Cariplo Foundation with 3 million Euros, the Executive Director of the ASCS, Mr. Andi Kananaj was invited to hold his speech about the functioning of the Agency in the support of Civil Society and the connections that the latter can activate for a more active role in development of the cooperation projects and immigration issues.

During these two days stay in Milan, the representatives of the ASCS had significant meetings with some of the most important actors of the sector. During the meeting with CELIM organization, it was agreed on and signed a Memorandum of Cooperation which provides a partnership between CELIM organization and the ASCS for joint projects, starting from this year. CELIM will be the antenna of the ASCS in Lombardy region, enabling so the activation of the institutional partnerships with civil society actors, in order to develop common ideas and fundraising activities. It was also agreed in principle, to enable the presence of the ASCS in civil society section of EXPO 2015.



Another successful meeting was the one with the representatives of the Office for International Relations at the Mayor of Milan. Marco Grandi, the Director of the Office expressed the need for institutional contacts with Albania in terms of civil society sector, and the ASCS shall be the preferential channel of the Municipality of Milan in terms of common projects. Some other partnership meetings were held with the Albanian Consulate in Milan and with many Albanian organizations based in Lombardy, which are active in the social sector and international cooperation.

7, 8, 9 October 2014

Consultative meetings "We share a common vision for the strategic partnership"

Having the goal of starting and developing a fruitful and successful cooperation between ASCS and Civil Society; ASCS has undertaken Consultative meetings on 7th, 8th and 9th October 2014; respectively in Vlora, Pogradec and Tirana under the motto:

"We share a common vision for the strategic partnership"



As part of the development of medium and long term strategy, in order to fulfill its mission, ASCS has gathered information and opinions from different actors and factors operating in the field of civil society.

Believing that the empowerment of civil society is an important tool in the relationship between citizens and institutions, the ASCS has been determined to be an active promoter of a healthy climate for independence, effectiveness and sustainability of civil society. This extensive consultative process with the civil society had successfully achieved the aim, namely the



initiation of new legal initiatives, as well as their monitoring and evaluation. The CSOs of the respective areas, according to the agenda had the opportunity to give their concrete input for initiating new legal initiatives, as well as their monitoring and evaluation.

The interest of CSOs in these consultative meetings was proved to be great, having a broad participation by nearly more than 120 representatives of CSOs.

This series of consultative meetings initiated by the ASCS has been the first and will continue with a second cycle that will cover the northern part of Albania.



To facilitate the expression of their own opinions, we previously distributed electronically and in hard copy a short questionnaire. They had answered and summarized their ideas and then became part of the discussion at the event, but will also be on the agenda of ASCS work. The participants appreciated the initiative

of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society as an important instrument of dialogue between civil society and state institutions.

Referring to the main issues rose by representatives of civil society during the meetings, there were identified the areas where cooperation between ASCS and civil society will be focused:

A. Strengthening the role of the ASCS

1. Strengthening the lobbying position of ASCS, e.g. contribution should be given on the removal of VAT for CSOs, that's to say, legislative changes concerning the VAT law on CSOs need to be done
2. Strengthening the role of the Supervisory Board of ASCS in terms of representation and dependence:
 - By increasing the representation in the Supervisory Board of the members from civil society and reducing the representation of members from the government and state institutions (The Board must be strengthened and have less members from government representatives. It must have some more members from civil society and some representatives from the parliamentary assembly.
 - Reducing the dependence of the Supervisory Board from the Government (It must be a structure that is not dependent on the Government, but above the Government).

3. ASCS is facing the challenge of improving its image. A legal initiative needs to be undertaken to increase volunteerism and capacity building.
4. Data updating of the current registry of SCOs, because a large number of CSOs are not active any more. Information must be collected to see how many people are employed by this sector

B. Strengthening the capacity and role of the organizations (civil society)

1. To increase the role of the ASCS by adjusting the legal framework for regulated professions.
2. Fees of the based services for non-profit organizations are costly, so facilities need to be undertaken
3. Facilities must be undertaken through lowering the costs for the basic services which will lead to the lowering of the costs for the total budget of CSOs.
4. A special attention should be given to the vulnerable groups, to the poorest
5. Strengthening the grassroots organizations, building their capacities
6. ASCS should grant projects to see how the conflict of interest is applied
7. Reintegration of the Albanian migrants who choose to live and work in their country by promoting civil society actors to encourage the young generation towards the labor market, because being unemployed they feel pessimistic;
8. Civil society should cooperate with public administration
9. There should be more transparency from all civil society actors including the ASCS
10. Creating a successful model for volunteerism
11. Civil Society should be the initiator of all initiatives
12. Capacity building for all the groups of the civil society that have as their mission social services
13. Special attention should be paid to persons with disabilities
14. Innovation problems must be treated and included.
15. Training of representatives of CSOs to better understanding and implementing of the European legislation
16. Bringing together our legislation with that of the EU, in all areas, and specifically, that of civil society
17. Active participation of civil society in the parliamentary committees
18. Attempts should be made to make null all the taxes wrongfully charged by the tax system at the expense of CSOs.
19. Establishment of joint regional forums (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, etc.) concerning schoolbooks, education etc..

Tirana, 10 October 2014

Workshop organized by "Barleti - Institute for Research and Development", in cooperation with "Adriapol Institute - Smart and Creative Development"



The Executive Director of the ASCS, Mr. Andi Kananaj attended, on 10 October 2014, a Workshop organized by "Barleti-Institute for Research and Development" in collaboration with "Adriapol Institute - Smart and Creative Development", in terms of the project "RiSi - Rini-Sipermarrje", a project funded by the Angjenci for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), under the title "Accessibility of the Legislation and the Political Factor to stimulate new Entrepreneurships, Start up and Spin off".

The organizers valued and thanked the ASCS and its Executive Director for the financial support, to meet project implementation, aiming at creating a generation of young entrepreneurs by strengthening collaborative networking opportunities and a dedicated support at the stages of the concretization of the business idea.