



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
AGENCY FOR THE SUPPORT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

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Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) proposes the creation of a Joint Fund with other donors, to support common projects of strategic importance for our country

On November 17, 2014, the Supervisory Board of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society held its regular meeting, where besides other problems related to the work of the ASCS, the members of the Board discussed an important issue, concerning the distribution of funds in support of the strategic initiatives of civil society to the benefit of the community.

Board members discussed about the areas and procedures used to finance projects in general, and among others they proposed the creation of a joint fund with other donors, who operate in our country. More specifically, it was proposed to set the amount of 20% of the total fund, as an integral part of the joint fund with other donors, to finance major projects of strategic importance for our country.

In this meeting, it was also suggested that the ASCS, in cooperation with other donors,

should determine the areas for which the cooperation is needed and the role that the ASCS shall play for the distribution of this joint fund, the procedures and rules that should be used for financing common projects.

Some board members also suggested that the ASCS, represented by the Executive Director together with a representative of the Supervisory Board, should conduct intensive meetings with each of the donors in order to agree on the creation of this common fund and to identify donor's profiles of interests related to a common major project during 2015 as well as aiming continuity in 2016 and more.

Finally, it was decided that 20% of the grant fund of ASCS shall be part of the joint fund and will be used to finance strategic projects which will also be financed by other donors operating in our country.

Tirana, 18 November 2014

Promoting and Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship: Benefits and Programs

Youth are at the heart of the society and also at the heart of the challenges society face through on-going urbanization and demographic mix, consumption habits as well as increasing expectations as regards quality of life.

Youth are becoming more and more of a focal point of our society at large, particularly because of on-going unemployment, and other social problems.



Youth entrepreneurship is one of the best approaches to how they can respond to the challenges of urban transformation and constant need for progress.

The activity held today, "Promoting and Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship: Benefits and Programs", was organized in a round table where Adriapol Institute, Marin Barleti University, the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) and entrepreneurs have discussed over the importance and benefits by the entrepreneurial activity as well as ongoing and future programs that have the aim of supporting and promoting Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

The aim of the round table was to highlight actions needed, for adopting a cross-sector approach in the existing youth entrepreneurship supporting policies.

The representative of ASCS, Mr. Erion Banushi, Head of "Sector of the Development of Programs, International

Cooperation and Communication" highlighted three key moments of ASCS Agency policies:

1. *The objectives of ASCS as a public entity: to help development and sustainability of Civil Society organizations in accordance with government strategies in respective sectors.*
2. *Priorities of ASCS: to strength the collaboration with different donors in order to benefit from donors funding programs.*
3. *The third one and the most important, in the framework of collaboration with youth and other new initiatives, ASCS has as a priority to support new organization and entrepreneurship to be active as civil society important actors.*

The representative of Youth Entrepreneurship, Mr. Idaver Sherifi (www.albeu.com) stressed some important factors of the entrepreneurship challenge.

Entrepreneurship itself is a combination of innovative ideas and a hard work, adaptable to the prevailing circumstances in our society.

In order to have a successful entrepreneurship, we must know very well the legislation and the market trends. Establishing network with the other actors operating in the same or similar field is another key of success to prevent overlapping and initiative failure.

Valletta (Malta), 13 November 2014

The Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) made Albania a member of the Board of Volonteuropo

This November, Albania became a member of the International Board of VOLONTEUROPE, a well known European network that promotes the values of active citizenship and volunteering for 23 years.

After the voting process of the representatives from 51 organizations, organized during the meeting on the 13th November, in Malta, a representative of the Albanian Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), Mr. Ismail Ademi, proved to be the winner for one of two vacant places in the International Board, composed of 9 members.

Although the Albania had the right of only one vote, that of the director of the ASCS, Mr. Andi Kananaj, Mr. Ismail Ademi, together with Prof.Dr.Doris Rosenkranz - the University of Nuremberg, got the majority of the votes.

The network is composed of 51 member organizations and it collaborates constantly with the European institutions, the European

Commission, the Parliament and the Council of Europe.

The Albania ASCS become, recently, a full rights member of the network of Volonteuropo.



Marie Louise Cole (President of Malta)

This year's meeting was held under the patronage of Mrs. Marie Louise Coleiro, the President of Malta, who also, awarded nine VolontEurope annual prizes for this year, among whom; it was also appraised Ms. Marsida Bandilli, the Albanian activists and student at Antwerp University, in Belgium.



Podgorica (Montenegro), 7 - 9 November 2014

ASCS participates in Freja Forum in Podgorica, Montenegro



From 7 to 9 November 2014, in Podgorica, it was held "Freja" Forum, which aims to increase the capacity and cooperation between civil society organizations in the Western Balkan region, Turkey and Europe.

The representative of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), Mr. Erion Banushi, Head of Sector "Development of Programs, International Cooperation and Communication", was invited in this forum to be a speaker at the seminar under the title "Regional strategy of cooperation between local governments and organizations that operate at the local level".



Mr. Banushi explained the important role that CSOs have in the development of not developed areas and the importance of their cooperation with local authorities for a sustainable development.

"Freja" Forum is an activity that takes place once a year, and next year it will be organized in Kosovo.

5 - 6 November 2014

Consultative meetings "We share the same vision for the strategic cooperation", in Lezha and Shkodra

Aiming the initiation and development of a fruitful and successful cooperation between ASCS and the civil society, the ASCS organized the final cycle of consultative meetings on 5th and 6th November 2014, respectively in Lezha and Shkodra cities under the motto:

"We share the same vision for the strategic cooperation"

In these meeting, it was noticed a very good participation of the representatives of the NGOs representing different group ages and interests, but what was the most important, it was the fact that the participants were the representatives of the young generation and of the groups of community with social problems.



The participants, through a questioner previously distributed and through an open dialogue, expressed their very valuable ideas and suggestions related to the difficulties they face with in their every day activity and also about the fields where the financial support, given by the ASCS should be focus on, in order to help them realize their mission.



Consultative meeting in Lezha

Consultative meeting in Shkodra

We consider this fact and think that their ideas and suggestions will be included in our work on drafting the work plan of ASCS for 2015, and also on drafting the short-term and long-term strategy of ASCS, to strongly support the civil society for their civil initiatives to the benefit of the community.

Some ideas and suggestions that came out of the discussions were:

1. Need for concrete assistance mainly for the poor strata of society;
2. Support for people with disabilities;
3. Financial support, specifically, for children with disabilities, as well as their integration into society;
4. Creating professional staffs who will deal directly with persons with disabilities of various natures;
5. Training of, not only the staffs who deal with persons with disabilities, but also of their families, who are related directly to that category in need;
6. Professional training of the young people and women of poor families;
7. Support for Roma, as well as protection of their rights;
8. Financial support for their education;
9. Much more interest must be shown on Roma culture, their integration into society;
10. Direct support for social services;
11. Financial support for providing education to orphans;
12. Training of the widow women, aiming their employment and the creation of economic independence;
13. Youth employment;
14. Capacity building for the grassroots organizations;
15. One of the participants expressed himself positive on the creation of a National Council for the civil society;
16. Facilitation why not tax removal for NGOs;
17. Encourage volunteerism; and evaluating it by incentive awards

October 2014

ASCS become a full rights member of VOLONTEUROPE



After a process which lasted for several months, the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) has become a full rights member, at the European Network (VOLONTEUROPE).

This international network exercises its activity to promote the values of volunteering, active citizenship and social justice at the European level and beyond. Currently this network is composed of 51 member organizations and collaborates constantly with European institutions (European Commission, Parliament, and Council of Europe).

Volonteuropa is working for years on building collaborative networks between partner organizations and institutional actors, as well as lobbying concerning the topics covered so far. In 2011 the Network was the initiator of "The European Year of Volunteering".

ASCS membership, joining this important network, will expand the possibilities of European cooperation of ASCS itself and also will be an opportunity for civil society organizations, to go, increasingly, beyond national boundaries.