

## TACSO BiH

### The second LAG meeting of TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Date:** Wednesday, 24. February 2010.

**Place:** Hotel Bosnia, Sarajevo

***Present LAG members:***

Aida Daguda (CPCD),  
Snježana Ivandić (ADI),  
Entoni Šeperić (Ministarstvo pravde FBiH),  
Džemal Hodžić (DEU u BiH),  
Alma Kurtalić umjesto Zuhre Talović (Direkcija za Evropske integracije),  
Mirjana Valjevac (USAID BiH),  
Amra Selesković (Vesta)

**TACSO team:**

Slavica Drašković, Resident Advisor  
Jelena Kuzmanović, Project Officer

***Absent LAG members:***

Nada Pejnović (Ministry of Local Administration and Self-governance of RS)

**Guests:**

Palle Westergaard, Team Leader, TACSO Regional Office and Yngve Engström, *Head of Unit* DG Enlargement. Direction D - Regional Programmes in Palle Westergaard, Team Leader, TACSO Regional Office

**Agenda and discussion:**

1. Introduction to the meeting
2. Current situation of the Civil Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina – CSOs a brief overview of the situation, bigger project etc.
3. TACSO Local Advisory Group second meeting – report by TACSO BiH Resident Advisor
4. Working lunch

### Flow of the LAG 2<sup>ND</sup> Meeting

During the meetings the participants received the agenda and a brief overview of the realized kick-off events.

## 1. Introduction to the meeting

At the beginning of the meeting Resident Advisor, Slavica Draskovic welcomed the guests, Mr. Palle Westergaard, the project team leader and Mr. Yngve Engström, Head of Unit DG Enlargement. Direction D -Regional Programs in Brussels, and presented the agenda to the guests and LAG members.

Team leader, Westergaard also greeted the present guests and LAG members, thanked them for their commitment and coming and reminded them how important these meetings were for TACSO projects and the CSOs due to the rare opportunities for exchanging views with people from Brussels and then gave the stand to Y. Engström.

After the introductory speeches, at the request of Y. Engström all the participants briefly introduced themselves and the organisations and institutions they represented.

In his further presentation Y. Engström presented his Department, Unit of Regional program. CSF - Civil Society Facility is the basic framework in which members of the Advisory Group of TACSO BiH project are included, aimed at strengthening the capacity of CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey to establish partnerships and strengthening the role of CSOs in the political process and exchange views with representatives of civil society leaders of the EU. CSF is composed of three parts: capacity building of CSOs, Visiting Program and Partnership Program.

CSF - Civil Society Facility was created after the experience of the last enlargement of EU. Through this framework a more coherent and systematic approach is applied to enable greater participation of CSOs and citizens in the monitoring process of joining the EU.

Y. Engström at the end of his presentation stressed that the LAG group is formed on a good platform and then invited LAG BiH members to present their opinion on the situation in which the BiH CSOs currently operate and the key issues concerning BiH CSOs.

## 2. Current situation of Civil Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina – CSOs a brief overview of the situation, bigger project etc.

LAG members pointed out that they were satisfied and honored to be a part of the LAG of TACSO BiH.

The LAG group composed of representatives of CSOs, government institutions and donors during the meeting set out their opinions of current situation of Civil Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina identifying key issues / themes:

- a. It was stressed that the processes in BiH should be local ownership and should be based on the needs, values and principles of local CSOs
- b. First LAG meeting was pointed out as articulation of the most common problems: overlapping of project activities, lack of transparency in CSOs work, lack of information, CSO mentality etc.
- c. New major projects that are currently being implemented in BiH are: TACSO, CiDi and LOD. It was rated that these projects represent an excellent opportunity to improve the

position of CSOs and according to opinion of the present would be good if there is cooperation among them.

- d. According to the different Law on Associations and Foundations, CSOs in BiH are represented by different types of associations: fishermen associations, veterans, sports and NGOs. It was emphasized that different types of organisations have different needs. Rarely, associations such as an association of fishermen and similar to them show a need for additional development and education comparing to NGOs who have a need for development and institutionalization.
- e. The NGOs should talk more about impacts.
- f. There is a need to approach networking problem transfer of knowledge (best practice), linking think- tank organisations, media and CSOs. In these terms experience from other countries would be useful.
- g. Only those organisations that have invested in people have survived on the market. Since 2007, there has been less money in BiH, so NGOs are becoming small home businesses.
- h. There is no consistent platform of dialogue of the government institutions and CSOs or the Ministry that would start this dialogue based on a sector approach. There is a lack of capacity and developed structures that would contribute to a more quality dialogue. Although support to CSOs by the government institutions is more declarative, CSOs are often viewed as a threat rather than an opportunity by the authorities. In FBiH the situation is more complicated because of the division of responsibilities and poor communication between the Entity of FBiH and its Cantons. It is necessary to establish institutional sector base mechanism of communication between government and CSOs, so the department of ministries would communicate with networks and CSOs working in the respectable sector.
- i. There is a space for work with the representatives of government institutions to improve cooperation and understanding on how the civil sector works. The support of the authority is usually related to covering the administrative costs for the targeted program activities. The long-term planning, volunteering and tax exception approach is not used.
- j. There are professional CSOs that provide certain services, but government institutions still do not recognize the quality and capacity of those organisations and variety of their offers.
- k. Professional organisations should work with small and membership-based organisations because these organisations can provide information about users. It was rated that only unions, as membership organisations are self-sustaining organisations.
- l. Professional organisations (about 500-1000 of them in BiH) have employees, and they have a need to build capacity necessary for applying to the grants.
- m. Despite identifying a great number of problems certain progress is evident in the sustainability index in the past several years. There is a need to resolve many problems, but these very same problems were identified by the Civil Sector that was developed in a very short time (15 years) in BiH. There is still a need for additional education and capacity building of CSO through technical assistance (TA), training, dialogue at all levels, volunteerism as the donors from this area prematurely withdrew from BiH.
- n. The need for a quality partnership (CSO-government) was identified which should exceed the project level, based on constant communication.
- o. Often different donors support the same initiatives.
- p. There was not enough work on the development of capacity that would enable an entrepreneurial approach to CSOs in terms of financial stability and sustainability. CSOs prefer to be in budget of different institutions rather than to have entrepreneurial aspect of their work. Association Vesta is good example of how sustainability has been achieved

through income generation project. In this way they provide the basic means for the organisations and contribution of 10% for projects funded by the EU.

### Draft suggestions

- IPA can support specific issues recognized by the CSOs through the consultation process
- As a good example or model of sector dialogue between governmental institution and CSOs is project lead by ADI with BiH Ministry of Justice. Through this project there has already been created a framework for dialogue with the justice sector related to organisations and networks from one side and the BiH Ministry of Justice on the other side
- TACSO could develop a model for a transfer from developed to less developed CSOs.
- Donors should establish better cooperation and coordination among themselves.
- Y. Engstrom suggested that the TACSO Regional Office should talk to USAID office regarding Sustainability Index definition and possible TACSO project cooperation

### 3. TACSO Local Advisory Group second meeting – report by TACSO BiH Resident Advisor

After the exchange of views on key issues related to the civil sector in BiH, Resident Advisor Slavica Draskovic presented the results of the three kick off workshops held.

By this meeting there were three thematic kick-off events "The role of CSOs within the process of European integration" held in cooperation with DEI. The kick-off events were held in Sarajevo (11.02.10), Tuzla (16.02.10.), Mostar (18.02.10). The kick-off in Banja Luka was announced for 25.02.10.

The Third LAG meeting will be organised in the first half of April.

N.B. Since members of the LAG have not discussed the manner of achieving agreement about proposals that have appeared, the record was made in the form of a summary of all suggestions and proposals that the present had.