



Institute for Democracy  
Societas Civilis - Skopje



# **IN THE LABYRINTHS OF THE POLICY MAKING CYCLE**

Opportunities for influence  
by the civil society organizations

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## Introduction

This policy brief shall aim to represent the foundations which determine the participatory policy making in the Republic of Macedonia. The participatory policy making is regarded as a separate public policy field, which may be developed and promoted through appropriate planning and measure implementation which in turn shall bring the exercise of public governance closer to the citizens and their associations.

In recent years, the state has made good progress in the regulation of legal framework, which affects the opportunities of citizen participation in the exercise of public governance. Although there is no specific law that comprehensively regulates this field, the specific provisions in various laws establish the grounds for citizen participation. More specifically, in the period between 2010 and 2015, the State passed a special Law on associations and citizen foundations, which laid the foundation for improvement of the enabling environment for the development of civil society; the Single national electronic register of regulations (SNER) was introduced, which acts as a web-based platform for monitoring and commenting the processes of regulation adoption of the executive authority. In most ministries, responsible persons were appointed for cooperation with the civil society. Variaty of acts were adopted and implemented, ones that offer guidelines for a more effective engagement of citizens and associations in the process of drafting legislation and the methodology was adopted for Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) that renders the grounds for better legislation incorporating therein the views of the stakeholders .

However, in addition to all these changes, the practice of participatory policy making in Macedonia remains relatively low and is characterized by many weaknesses in the implementation thereof. The Report an enabling environment for civil society development of MCIC (MCMS) 2014 notes a principal „lack of adherence to and non-compliance with provisions (NB: laws and bylaws) by the line ministries“ (p. 36).<sup>1</sup> Ministries have failed to publish much of the draft laws on SNER and have largely failed to adhere to all the stages of consultation according to the methodology of RIA. Furthermore, in almost half (47%) of the published regulations, the minimum period for consultation has not been kept to, and in two thirds of cases ministries have offered no feedback to any of the submitted objections. The Report also notes that there is little interest in civil society organizations to participate in the policy making through ENER: in 2014 the civil society organizations commented only 28 times to only 15 legislative proposals.<sup>2</sup>

Specifically, major weaknesses have been observed as regards to the (in) accessibility of the text of law proposals in the early stages of policy development, the degree and nature of involvement of the civil society (which is evident to be non-crucial), provision of feedback by the ministries, the low capacity of civil servants to engage civil society organizations and the lack of a standardized mechanism for engaging civil society organizations in cross-sector bodies.<sup>3</sup>

The report, „Mirror to the Government“ for 2014, however, has noted that only a quarter (25%) of all ministries, maintain registries of civil society organizations to notification thereof, a quarter (25%) maintain written documents setting forth guidelines for civil society organizations‘ engagement, and only

one ministry has established a pre-planned procedure for selection of civil society organizations to participate in consultative bodies. On the other hand, as high as 83% of the ministries have nominated officers to attend civil society engagement training sessions, whereas 75% have designated a person in charge of cooperation with the civil society organizations. In the questionnaire entitled “Mirror to the Government, the majority of ministries (67%) responded to have engaged civil society organizations in the consultative bodies.<sup>4</sup>

Taking into account this situation, in addition to this public policy document, an attempt will be made to outline the main features of the policy making process, strongly focusing on the opportunities and weaknesses of the civic participation.

## Framework for Policy Making

This public policy paper shall refer to “public policy” in terms of „a system of guidelines for action, regulation and priorities of funding of a specific area, which arise from public governance.“<sup>5</sup>

The policy process can be presented in phases and cycles, taking into account the time sequencing of various steps in the process (see Figure 1). The ideal customized policy making cycle shall consist of the following six stages:

1. Agenda setting – a phase highlighting the problems and issues that should be addressed by state institutions. Actors, who can participate in setting the agenda are commonly inclusive of, but not limited to

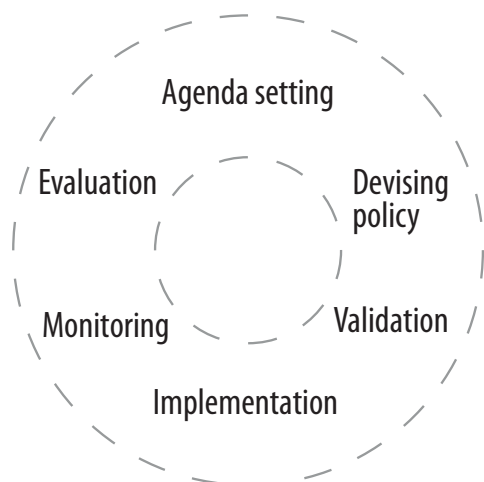
the following: state bodies and institutions, political parties, the media, civil society organizations and informal civic initiatives, as well as private companies.

2. Devising policy - the phase in which goals are set, but also possible solutions for their accomplishment formulated, and implications thereof forecasted. An integral part of this phase is the choice of an optimal solution and tools for implementation thereof. The policies are being devised by the public authority bodies, which ideally would include the stakeholders, the citizens and their associations, the experts, the private companies, other state bodies and institutions and etc., in the process.. Policies are expressed in legislation, strategies, action plans and other acts and documents.
3. Validation – a phase which ascertains the public support of the selected targets/goals, solutions and instruments. Validation includes: public discussions with stakeholders, opportunities for direct expression of citizens’ views on proposed solutions and actions, and the adoption by the competent national authorities. The phase of validation is particularly important in democratic societies, although the other phases of the cycle of policy making often contain elements of validation.
4. Implementation - within this phase, the implementation of solutions created for public policy is organized. Typically, the implementation is carried out by that respective public administration body operating in the specific field of public policy, which has the required resources at its disposal. The enforcement of

specific policy or segments thereof may be delegated to other authorities, private companies or civil society organizations.

5. Monitoring - during the monitoring phase, data is collected on the manner of public policy implementation. The monitoring phase is closely related to the evaluation phase and is an immediate predecessor thereto. The monitoring is carried out according to a predetermined methodology, and can be performed by government agencies, but also by civil society organizations, experts and private companies. Often, the civil society organizations propagate actions for monitoring and assessment of public policies.
6. Evaluation- this phase evaluates the extent to which the implemented policy has rendered the required results pursuant to forecasted goals/targets and solutions. The evaluation shall be performed by the public authority bodies, but it may be performed by private entities (association of citizens, private companies, experts- of their own volition or by delegation). This phase determines if further action is required in order to achieve the set out goals.

Figure 1 Phases in the policy making cycle



## Normative Provisions for Participatory Policy Making in the Republic of Macedonia

According to the structure of the political system, the two key powers in the devising and implementation of policies are the legislative and executive authority. The Legislature (the Assembly) is crucial in the adoption of legislation, while the Executive authority (the Government and the ministries) is crucial in the preparation and implementation thereof. In practice, the Government is overwhelmingly the most active drafter and proposer of bills. During the work of the seventh Parliamentary composition of the Assembly (2011-2014), almost 98% of all bills were proposed by the Government (888 bills to 19 bills proposed by the MPs).<sup>6</sup> This indicates an established dominant role of the Government in the preparation of legislation and devising of policy.

Taking into consideration the foregoing hierarchy, it seems that the stakeholders, among which are the civil society organization, have the opportunity to assert influence over the relevant state authorities in the course of the two interwoven stages, i.e. in the drafting of bills during the proceeding before 1) Government and 2) Assembly.

In addition, this section will highlight the normative modes that are designated for stakeholder participation in the policy-making processes within the two procedures. In addition, constitutional and legal provisions will be presented, which generally provide for the enabling of citizens' participation, citizen associations and other stakeholders in the

policy-making processes.

## **Normative grounds for participatory policy making**

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia 7 sets forth the grounds for the participation of citizens and their associations in achieving both levels of public governance - central and local (via Articles 2 and 115, respectively). It is stipulated that the citizens partake in public governance through the democratically elected envoys and through referendums and other forms of direct articulation. The Constitution guarantees the freedom of establishment of associations of citizens (Article 20), and the free access to information (Article 16) and the right to assemble peacefully and express public protest (Article 21).

The Constitution sets forth criteria for participation of citizens in the process of adoption of legislation and calls for referendums, which are based on prescribed rules according to which such initiatives shall warrant mandatory response by the state authorities. According to Article 71, citizens' associations may file an initiative to the authorized proposal makers (the MPs, the Government and 10,000 voters) for adoption of laws. According to Article 73, the Assembly is obliged to call a referendum if one is proposed by at least 150,000 voters.

Apart from the presented constitutional provisions, in recent years, a legal framework has been devised to detail the public policy in the area of participatory policy making. The central legislation in this area is the following: the Law on Associations and Foundations,<sup>8</sup> the Law on Government,<sup>9</sup> The Law on Organization and Operation of the State Administration<sup>10</sup> and the Law on

the Assembly.<sup>11</sup> In the secondary legislation which is also binding for the institutions, the provisions which address the public policy are specified in the Rules of Procedure of the Government, <sup>12</sup> the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly,<sup>13</sup> the Code of Good Practices for participation of civil society in the policy making process,<sup>14</sup> the Guidelines on actions by the ministries to involve the stakeholders in the process of drafting of laws,<sup>15</sup> as well as in the Methodology for Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA).<sup>16</sup>

The Law on Associations and Foundations supports the free participation of organizations in public initiatives, stipulating that „Organizations are free to express and promote their views and opinions on issues of their interest, to raise initiatives and participate in building public opinion and policy making „ (Article 14).

## **Provisions on participatory policy making in the governmental procedure**

The Law on Government and the Rules of Procedure of the Government regulate several aspects of the relationship between the Government and the stakeholders in the policy making process. Foremost, the law establishes an obligation for the Government to inform the public about its work and the implementation of its Annual Work Program (Article 7). The Prime Minister, shall be directly responsible for the establishment of the cooperation with the citizens' associations and other legal persons (Article 11), as well as for inviting representatives of the NGOs to participate in the discussions at the meetings of the Government without the decision-

making discretionary right (Article 22).

The Rules of Procedures of the Government specify additional opportunities for stakeholders' involvement, among which are the civil society associations, in the activities of the working bodies of the Government (Article 48), and in the working groups that are formed by the working bodies (Article 57). It is stipulated that the chairperson of the bodies shall be responsible for inviting stakeholders, following his/her own initiative or following the initiative of the proposer/proponent of the material. The working groups, however, shall be established by a decision of the bodies, with members to be nominated by the working bodies. The possibility remains open for representatives of the civil society associations, as well as scientific, professional and public workers to participate in the working groups.

The Rules of Procedure also define the procedure of putting forward initiatives by civil society associations and other entities to the Government (Article 137). It is stipulated that the initiatives of the civil society associations and other legal entities shall be submitted to the Secretary General of the Government, who will then forward them to the relevant ministries, or to the competent institutions on certain issues over which the Government holds no authority.

The Law on Organization and Operation of the State Administration identifies initial mechanisms for consultation of the ministries with the citizens in the preparation of regulations. It prescribes that „the state administration bodies, in drafting laws and other regulations within their powers, shall provide consultation with citizens through: 1) publication of the type, content and deadlines for submission of laws and other regulations;

2) organizing public debates and 3) obtaining opinions from interested associations of citizens and other legal entities“ (Article 10).

Guidelines on actions by the ministries to involve the stakeholders in the process of drafting of laws, in turn, closely specifies the ways in which the stakeholders are to be involved, including the civil society associations. The Guidelines in details specify the following:

- Method of informing the stakeholders in the preparation of legislation (Article 3);
- Method of using SNER and the websites of the ministries in the planning and drafting of legislation (Article 4);
- Tools used by ministries and manner of implementation thereof: consultations via SNER, public review of bills and the initial RIA within 30 days, public debates on the bill and the initial/complete RIA, written consultation following the public review, and additional tools: consultation through participation in working groups and consultation on specific topics and issues (Articles 5-8); as well as
- Obligation of ministries to publish a report within 10 days after the consultations, which will incorporate the comments, opinions and suggestions offered by the stakeholders (Article 9).

The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Policy Process is an additional document that establishes specific guidelines for national authorities in the involvement of the civil society. Unlike previous documents, this document is directed directly to the civil society organizations as one of the

key stakeholders in the policy making process. The Code, inter alia, establishes principles and areas of cooperation (Articles 3 and 4), defines the forms (information, consultation, dialogue and partnership) and the stages of cooperation (Article 5), instruments for the civil sector involvement (Article 6) as well as guidance on the application of its provisions (Article 7).

The Methodology for conducting the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) envisages three consultative processes in the RIA implementation (one in analyzing the situation and defining the goals/targets, another one in analyzing the impact of the options and determining the optimal solution, and the third one through SNER and consultation, in the generation of the RIA draft-report). On the other hand, during the phase of decision-making within the ministries and the Government, no advisory consultative activities have been foreseen.

## Provisions for participatory policy making in the parliamentary procedure

The Law on the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, lays down certain aspects of the relationship between the Assembly together with the MPs and the stakeholders. Under Article 8, the MP shall, in the course of his/her regular duties, establish contacts, consultations and cooperation with the citizens, associations and unions. One way of achieving the foregoing is via the regular „open days for meeting of the MPs with the citizens and the constituency“ which are conducted every last day of the working week. Article 20 of the same Law provides the possibility for participation of „third persons“, including

representatives of NGOs, regarding issues that are subject to oversight hearings.

Figure 2 Overview of instruments for involvement of NGOs

- Working groups (Government);
- Working bodies (Government);
- Three cycles of consultation within the RIA;
- SNER prescribed deadlines for consultation and public review of bills;
- Participation at the Government sessions without a decision making discretionary right;
- Submitting initiatives to the Government;
- Submitting proposals to the Work Program of the Government;
- Public debates organized by the state administration authorities;
- Participation at the working bodies of the Assembly (Committees);
- Public debates within the working bodies of the Assembly (Committees);
- Initiatives for the discussion on specific issues to the working bodies of the Assembly;
- Submitting initiatives to the authorized proposers of bills (MPs, the Government and 10,000 electors);
- Direct contacts with Members of Parliament;
- Parliamentary oversight hearings.

The Rules of Procedure of the Assembly establish additional opportunities for participation of citizens and their associations in the work of the Assembly and in the legislative process. Participation in sessions of the working bodies of the Assembly in order to express opinions (Article 122), submitting initiatives for the discussion on specific issues to the working bodies by associations and other interested parties (Article 124), participation in public



debates within the working body on laws of general interest (Article 145 and Article 198 for constitutional amendments) are the most significant opportunities that are provided for in this document. The review of the legislative framework indicates that the stakeholders, including the civil society organizations have been made available many instruments for participation in the policy-making processes. However, the legal framework rarely prescribes mandatory provisions for the application of the available instruments, which in practice means that some of the instruments have never been implemented or have been hardly ever applied. Figure 2 shows an overview of the available instruments for the inclusion of the civil society organizations, according to the possibilities set out in the regulatory framework.

## **The Gap between the Normative Framework and the Practice**

The existence of a relatively closed maneuvering space for advocacy actions by the civil society organizations within the decision-making process is not a new statement. After all, such statement has been noted in several reports by the European Commission,<sup>17</sup> but also in analysis by the civil society organizations<sup>18</sup>. The purpose of this section is not only to repeat the same conclusion, but based on practical analyzes to show why some cases are more successful and to offer an introduction to the next section, wherein an attempt will be made to outline the political cycle, the way we deem it is being applied in Macedonia. Similarly, the majority of the examples that we will use

for this analysis arise from the „Participatory Policy Making“ Agora session held on July 15, 2015, with 19 representatives of the civil society organizations and experts.<sup>19</sup>

When talking about the practice of civil society's involvement in the decision making, we actually talk about nominal inclusion. Participation is either ad hoc or applied as a result of a specific requirement outlined in a project. More commonly, the involvement is asserted by the very organizations rather than rendered as an “automatic” practice in the process of policy planning and engagement of the civil society organizations as part of the pool of stakeholders.

If one looks at the normative framework and methodology for policy making, one can observe that the inclusive process is inherent. Even at the very onset of the policy planning, stages are envisaged wherein consultation with stakeholders should be present. Having said that, legally, this process is depoliticized in the sense that the consultations as such, are no longer dependent on the political will of the officials

However, there is a clearly visible gap between such institutionalization of the consultation process and the practice which is limited and dependent on the situational factors. In this sense, one of the most important examples of comprehensive involvement of the civil society organizations is the one rendered in the drafting of the Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership. However, such process is a given and acts as a benchmark for success by the international partner. Similar examples of the involvement of the civil society organizations as a result of the influence by the international factor are identified in the preparation of the Law on Free Legal Assistance as well as in the

planning of the IPA 2 instrument.

### **Consultants or a stakeholder?**

Similarly, the prevailing opinion is that the decision making process should involve the civil society organizations with their own expertise. There are examples indicating that different civil society organizations have been involved in various working groups responsible for drafting.<sup>20</sup> However, such application of the consultative practice thwarts the position of the civil society organizations in the political process. Involvement in the process for the purposes of rendering expertise makes little difference between organizations and private consultants. Such practice fails to acknowledge parts of civil society as stakeholders who may not possess any specialized expertise in order to be eligible to „sit at the negotiating table.“ Hence the frequent problem of accepting the technical comments on policy proposals (or later incorporating them in laws and policies) and in turn, mainly ignoring the substantive proposals that determine or modify the purpose of the proposals.

### **Political will- decisive factor**

In the absence of systematic application of the institutionalization of the consultative practice, the existence of political will remains to be one of the key factors of the (un)successfulness of the civil society organizations to exert influence in the policy making process.

The existence of political will is a relatively easy option for exercising influence by the means of which the civil society organizations are provided a necessary forum to incorporate their recommendations. One such example is the cooperation between the public institutions and the civil society organizations

in the planning of the IPA 2 instrument. In addition to the support by the Delegation of the European Union, a significant share in the successful involvement of the civil society organizations was apportioned to the willingness of the government officials to facilitate this process. Similar examples may be found in the participation in many committees established by the public institutions. While this is useful, and makes for the grounds for an even more substantial involvement of the civil society in the policy making, it takes more time to establish the effect of such involvement. This statement refers to the fact that many examples indicate just formal participation, whereas even the bodies themselves are not involved in the decision-making process since the policy is created at a higher level.

### **Exerting influence in the absence of political will**

A recent Report on the progress of the implementation of the Government's Strategy has concluded that during the period July 2012-December 2014, i.e the first year and a half of the implementation, only one measure has been realized, out of the 15 envisaged, which relate to participatory policy making.<sup>21</sup> It suggests absence of political will for consultative policy-making. So the question then is posed: What happens in cases of absence of political will? How the civil society organizations have thus far safeguarded influence?

The term “influence” is deliberately used in the analysis of cases in which organizations have been successfully (or to a degree) engaged in the policy making or in the policy-making prevention. Three key strategies help to ensure the influence of the civil society organizations: mobilizing support, coalition building and

media exposure.

## **Membership mobilization as a strategy**

Organizations, which are based on membership and the professional associations, get easier accesses to a forum whereon they can exert influence on the decision making process. The foregoing is not systematic, and examples can be singled out in which unions have not been involved in the adoption of laws (eg. the Law on Higher Education) but also such examples in which unions were included, like the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) in the adoption of the Law on Media.

The power of this type of organizations is in their size, which offers the potential for leverage. In the absence of willingness to be included in a policy, such organizations are able to mobilize their membership and radicalize the situation into a protest. Such potential increases with the very expansion into a coalition. One such example is the protest of the students in 2014-2015, where the Student Plenum, expanded with the support of the Teacher Plenum was a significant factor in the cessation of the enactment of the Law on Higher Education. Upon adoption of the Law on Civil Liability for Defamation, some of the disputed proposals were successfully modified after a viral reaction on the Internet, such as the so-called „eclipse of the Internet“ – an effect of blackout of webpages in protest.

Similarly, the support of the citizens can be directly channeled through collecting signatures as a form of direct democracy. Such initiative can be proposed by an informal association, as in the example of AMAN, which gathered enough signatures to propose amendments to a law in the Assembly.

However, formal organizations in Macedonia, such as Polio Plus, have also secured sufficient support to put forward a bill before the Assembly.

## **Building coalitions for coordinated advocacy**

The second strategy, which is built on the mobilization of support by members, refers to building a coalition between the civil society organizations in order to augment their influence. The uniting of organizations in a coalition that will advocate for common recommendations strengthens the position of the civil society organizations as a stakeholder. In parallel, the coalition provides greater potential for mobilizing support from members of organizations, but also provides for grounds and greater likelihood of recommendations and advocacy to be shifted into the media. One such successful example, when civil society organizations managed to prevent the adoption of a policy for which they were not consulted, were the activities of a network of organizations working in the field of youth related issues. Thus, after the publication of the draft law, several organizations united around the idea that such a proposal should be revoked, which, after a brief period of advocacy of this recommendation and involvement of the media, has delivered such an outcome. Similarly, during the preparation of the Law on Media, it is evident that in addition to the AJM, an implicit alliance of many organizations has joined AJM in the preparation of the Law on Media to articulate their views, recommendations and arguments.

## **Media exposure as potential for exerting influence**

In a relatively closed decision-making process, the important factor that offers potential for expansion of the influence of organizations is the media exposure of contentious issues in proposed policy or in the process of exclusion of stakeholders from the process. Most successful ventures aimed towards bringing or ceasing a certain policy account for media exposure. This is particularly important in cases of a wide-ranging disagreement among stakeholders, in this case the decision makers and the civil society organizations. The examples such as the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Media and the initiative by AMAN generated a significant level of media coverage which facilitated positioning of the organizations as interested parties, and has also enabled mobilization of support.

The foregoing in itself does not necessarily provide for successful achievement of the set goals. The decision-making process is politics and success is not always determined by the formal achievement of the criteria but by the decision making powers of the opposing sides. This is particularly evident in systems where the policy-making does not depend on sufficient evidence and arguments and is often the product of arbitrary decisions or solutions. Additionally, the practice shows that if the relationship between the civil society organizations and the decision makers is brought into the media arena, and such arena proves to be antagonistic, the civil society organizations in the Macedonian context being vulnerable to attacks, can suffer significant obstructions in their future activities.

## **Conclusion: Macedonian version of the policy making cycle**

Taking into account the available data presented in this analysis, it is possible to construct a Macedonian version of the policy making cycle. This will be made in order to show the deviations from the ideal cycle which indicates the serious weaknesses in the policy making in the Republic of Macedonia. These weaknesses are important in terms of citizen participation in the process, but also in terms of the overall method of policy making which insufficiently relies on data, analysis and rational evaluation of the available options (solutions).

Consequently, the policy making process in the Republic of Macedonia is thought of as composed of three stages which are not mutually cyclically linked (see Figure 3). In Macedonia there is agenda setting, decision-making and implementation, as three phases which are characteristic in the process of policy making. Therefore, we may speak of overlapping of these stages, where as early as in the stage of setting the agenda, the solution is frequently defined, and the decision making implied. Thus, unilaterally and without public evaluation of available solutions (policy options) laws and other acts are passed and further on implemented. Moreover, in all these stages, inconsistent stakeholder involvement is evident. At the same time, in cases where stakeholders are involved, the obstacles are inherent since the solutions are (frequently) predefined.

Additionally, SNER as a tool is not the solution for involvement in the decision-making

processes at all stages. SNER is a tool that collects suggestions for solutions once defined alternatives already exist. In that regard, SNER cannot be used for setting up one topic on the policy-making agenda. For such purposes, the e-Democracy portal was established, who is even less widely used by either the public institutions or the civil society organizations.

In most cases, the phases of validation, monitoring and evaluation are not implemented at all, or are improperly enforced. Failure to follow these phases directly affects both the quality of policies and the opportunities for involvement of the civil society organizations and other interested parties.

*Figure 3 Cycle and stages of a political cycle in a Macedonian context*



The analysis shows that the Republic of Macedonia has defined an appropriate normative framework for the inclusion of the civil society organizations in the decision making process. However, what is noticeable is the absence of political will to consult the stakeholders. The culture of consultation depends on the long-term process of

democratization which is conditioned by many factors. Therefore, the basic assumptions for the systematic and institutionalized inclusiveness of the political process remain a matter of long-term goals of the civil society and activism.

Meanwhile, the civil society organizations in Macedonia has several short-term tactics left to exert influence, taking into account the existing factors in practice.

1. The civil society organizations in conditions of a relatively closed decision-making process can adapt ambitious targets to ensure minimum necessary political will to stay in the process. For that to be achieved, it is extremely important to continuously map the stakeholders and to identify the allies and opponents in order to effectively determine the feasible short-term objectives.

However when the foregoing is impossible, the civil society organizations can increase their potential influence through the following:

1. Mobilizing support and building membership through which they reinforce the image as a stakeholder;
2. Acting through coalitions, especially since practice in Macedonia shows that single organizations are less visible or are subject to exclusion in the decision making process;
3. Media exposure of problems -in situations where the process of cooperation with public institutions and decision makers leads to ignoring of or excluding the civil society organizations.

- 1 Ognenovska, Simona (2015) Report on an enabling environment for civil society development in Macedonia 2014. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje, p. 36. Available at: <http://mcms.mk/images/docs/2015/izvestaj-za-ovozmozuvacika-okolina.pdf> (accessed: 01/24/2016).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ognenovska, Simon and Borjan Gjuzelov (2014) Mirror to the Government 2014: Public participation in the process of drafting of legislation. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje. Available at: <http://mcms.mk/images/docs/2014/analiza-ogledalo-na-vladata-2014.pdf> (accessed: 24.01.2016).
- 5 Kilpatrick, Dean G. Definitions of Public Policy and the Law. Available at: <https://mainweb-v.musc.edu/vawprevention/policy/definition.shtml> (accessed: 24.01.2016).
- 6 Report on the seventh parliamentary composition of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia 25.06.2011 - 05.03.2014. Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Available at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/content/izvestai/2011-2014/Mandaten%20izvestaj%207%20sostav%202011-2014.pdf> (accessed: 24.01.2016).
- 7 Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia with amendments to the Constitution I-XXXII, Available at: <http://www.sobranie.mk/ustav-na-rm.nspix> (accessed: 24.01.2016).
- 8 Law on Associations and Foundations, Official Gazette no. 52/2010.
- 9 Law on Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette no. 59/2000.
- 10 Law on Organization and Operation of the State Administration Bodies, Official Gazette no. 58/2000
- 11 The Law on Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette no. 104/2009.
- 12 Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (consolidated text), Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, no. 36/2008..
- 13 Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, no. 91/2008; Rules of Procedure amending and supplementing the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 119/2010; and Rules of Procedure amending and supplementing the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, no. 23/2013.
- 14 Code of Good Practices for participation of civil society organizations in the policy making process, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 99/2011.
- 15 Guidelines on actions by the ministries to involve the stakeholders in the process of drafting of laws, Official Gazette no. 150/2011.
- 16 Methodology for Regulatory Impact Assessment, Official Gazette no 107/2013.
- 17 For example, the latest Progress Report by the European Commission (2015) notes that „the involvement of the civil society organizations in the policy making and drafting of legislation remains insufficient”(SVD (2015) 212, p. 10).
- 18 See Ognenovska, Simona (2015) Report on the enabling environment for civil society development in Macedonia 2014. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation; Mangova, Iliana (2015) Increasing public participation in the Macedonian Assembly. Institute for Democracy „Societas Civilis“ Skopje (IDSCS), Skopje. Available at: <http://idscs.org.mk/images/parliament-watchdog/briefs/Iliana-MK.pdf> (accessed: 24.01.2016); REACTOR (2015) Citizen participation in Macedonia from 2012 to 2014. Reactor - Research in Action, Skopje. Available at: [http://www.graganskoucestvo.mk/static/pdf/gragjansko\\_uchestvo2012-1014\\_mkd.pdf](http://www.graganskoucestvo.mk/static/pdf/gragjansko_uchestvo2012-1014_mkd.pdf) (accessed: 24.01.2016); and Ognenovska, Simona and Borjan Gjuzelov (2014) Mirror to the Government 2014: Public participation in the process of drafting of legislation. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje.
- 19 See First Agora session: Participatory Policy Development, website of IDSCS. Available at: <http://idscs.org.mk/mk/tekovni-proekti/81-agora-sesii/657-prva-agora-sesija-participativno-kreiranje-politiki> (accessed: 24.01.2016).
- 20 For example, in recent years the civil society organizations have been involved in the working groups in preparation of the Law on Associations and Foundations, the Law on Free Legal Aid; the amendments and supplements to the Electoral Code; the amendments and supplements to the Law on Free Access to Public Information, the Law and Strategy on Volunteering. (See: Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil society 2012-2017. Government of the Republic of Macedonia, June 16, 2012, p. 32. Available at: [http://ogledalonavladata.mk/images/docs/propisi/8-strategija-za-sorabotka-na-vladata-so-gragjanskiot-sektor-\(2012-2017\).pdf](http://ogledalonavladata.mk/images/docs/propisi/8-strategija-za-sorabotka-na-vladata-so-gragjanskiot-sektor-(2012-2017).pdf) (accessed: 24.01.2016)).
- 21 Ognenovska, Simona (2015) Report on the implementation of the Strategy for cooperation with the civil sector for the period June 2012 to December 2014. Document for Public Policy. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje. Available at: <http://mcms.mk/images/docs/2015/izveshtaj-za-sproveduvanje-na-strategijata-za-sorabotka-na-vladata-so-gragjanskiot-sektor.pdf> (accessed: 24.01.2016).



On its way, the IDSCS has a vision for Macedonia as a highly developed democracy of free and active citizens. The IDSCS Mission is to support the development of democratic processes by promoting policies based on research, analysis and consultation with stakeholders.

IDSCS explores the development of good governance, the rule of law and the European integration of Macedonia. IDSCS has a mission to assist the citizens' involvement in the decision-making process and to strengthen the participatory political culture. By strengthening the libertarian values, the IDSCS contributes to the coexistence of diversity.

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