

Agora Sessions - Practicing Participatory Policy Making

Implemented by the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis"- Skopje

Supported by the British Embassy Skopje

Project Purpose: Increased participation of civil society in rule of law policies through improved mechanisms for participatory policy making.

Background: Normatively, *participatory policy making* exists in Macedonia. However, the evidence shows that neither the Government, nor CSOs and other stakeholders demonstrate much action when a legislative proposal is open for participation. A monitoring report "Government Mirror" found that in 2014 in almost half of the proposed legislative pieces (47%) the Government did not respect the minimal 10 day period for consultation, publishing the whole set of materials including the draft-reports in the final days for consultation. On the other hand, only 28 commentaries on a total of 15 legislative pieces have been submitted by the CSO's in all of 2014.

The Agora sessions Project aims to improve and increase the participation of civil society organisations in national policy making in Macedonia by scrutinizing the implementation of participatory policy making, and facilitating CSOs input in the ongoing policy formulation process. The Project also aims to assist in structured coordination and cooperation of the CSO's and the Government in the process of policy development.

Main stakeholders: 1. Government ministries which work in the rule of law area (Chapters 23 and 24 from the EU acquis): Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Justice (MJ), Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA); 2. Civil society organizations, think tanks, academic and expert community, which work and research rule of law policies.

Main activities:

A1: Baseline Analysis on participatory policy making in the area of Rule of Law in Macedonia including an Agora Session with CSOs, Government representatives and experts. **Output:** Policy brief on participatory policy-making in the area of rule of law.

A2: Capacity-building of CSOs in Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in Macedonia, an Agora Session on implementation of RIA and preparation of roster of experts in rule of law. **Outputs:** Capacity-building training for CSOs; Roster of experts in rule of law.

A3: Preparation of policy-calendar on 2015 Government Program, Agora Session for and preparation of Recommendations for the 2016 Government Program in rule of law. **Outputs:** Online Calendar of the 2015 Government Program and structured CSOs Recommendations for 2016 Government Program in rule of law.

A4: Preparation of policy study: Analysis on participatory policy making "From Bill to Law" focused on implementation of RIA and an Agora Session on implementation of RIA. **Output:** Policy study "From Bill to Law" on the process of participatory policy making in Macedonia.

Long term impact: The project will contribute to development of participatory policy making in Macedonia, as result of higher capacities of CSOs, their joint performance and appearance and produced bulk of research and recommendations aiming to support more efficient implementation of the process.

Project budget: £ 64,280

Timeframe of implementation: May 2015 – March 2016

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