

Public reaction against the negative campaign against the civil society

The Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" Skopje issues a public reaction with regard to the attacks by certain political parties, politicians, media and civil society organizations against the civil society organizations in Macedonia within the campaign conducted under the slogan "desoroization."

The Institute for Democracy agrees that the work of civil society organizations is open to criticism, but only if it is based on arguments and evidences. In this campaign, that is not the case. So far verifiable arguments in support of the allegations against the civil society were not presented.

In this context we believe that the very idea of the civil society is attacked by speculation, labeling and threats. We warn that this campaign threatens the constitutional right of citizen organization and publicly expressed criticism. Moreover, it could motivate specific attacks against members of civil society organizations and civic initiatives. All of this brings unforeseeable negative consequences for the country and society.

Civil society organizations since the independence of Macedonia **have played an extremely important and constructive role and have been involved in all important stages of its development.** Civil society directly participates in improving the lives of citizens or in cooperation with state institutions.

Among other activities, civil society organizations has been instrumental in several important changes:

1. Inter-ethnic reconciliation;
2. Reducing discrimination against vulnerable social groups;
3. Providing skills for easier employment of unemployed;
4. Raising awareness of environmental pollution;
5. More efficient and accountable use of citizens' public money.

At the same time, a significant part of the projects involved state institutions and political parties, for whom we have built skills, knowledge and infrastructure, so that they can provide better services to citizens. **The state, political parties and civil society are partners and should build an alliance focused on qualitative changes. An alliance, which includes processes of observation and criticism to ensure progress. This right to criticism must not be contested or impeded.**

Respectfully,
IDSCS

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