Germany

Spain

Poland

Hungary

Russia

2016
Report
on the
State of
Civil
Society
in the
EU and
Russia

EU-RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
ГРАЖДАНСКИЙ ФОРУМ **ЕС-РОССИЯ**

EU-Russia Civil Society Forum (CSF) is an independent network of thematically diverse NGOs, established as a bottom-up civic initiative. Its goal is to strengthen cooperation between civil society organisations and contribute to the integration of Russia and the EU, based on common values of pluralistic democracy, rule of law, human rights, and social justice. Launched in 2011, CSF now has 153 members: 59 from the EU, 85 from Russia, and 9 international organisations.

The Forum serves as a platform for members in articulating common positions, providing support and solidarity, and exerting civic influence on governmental and intergovernmental relations. These goals are pursued by bringing together CSF members for joint projects, research and advocacy; by conducting public discussions and dialogues with decision-makers; and by facilitating people-to-people exchanges.

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PREFACE

Dear colleagues, friends and supporters
of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum,

we are happy and proud to present the first issue of a new series of annual Reports on the State of Civil Society in the EU and Russia. This was initiated by members of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum who wished to acquire more systematic information and assessment on NGOs and civil society development elsewhere, especially in the EU member states.

We can often perceive each other's challenges and strategies as being too dissimilar or even unique. These gaps in the perception of real and potential partners hinder cooperation. With this series of annual reports we hope to strengthen understanding and provide new chances for cooperation and exchange opportunities. We try not only to understand conditions and challenges in different countries but also to find interesting solutions, which can be used.

Our strategy was to combine academic and practical approaches to civil society studies, in order to capture the main characteristics and trends of civil society development in a particular year, to show the perspectives and concerns of the civil society organisations in different countries, both of the CSF members and all other organisations, who wished to express their opinions.

In 2016, our researchers made an overview of existing indices measuring the state of civil society in various countries, with the presentation of results from all EU member states and Russia. The indices that measure sustainability of civil society organisations (CSOs) confirm a pattern of geographical divisions in Europe, with the "old" member states demonstrating stability in terms of the strength of NGOs and the Southern and Eastern European members lagging behind or, in some cases, rolling back. Other groups of indices largely confirm the same pattern of geographical divisions yet do not illustrate any alarming trends. The case of Russia is more worrying, showing a clear regression in terms of the legal environment for CSOs.

With these general conclusions in mind, we conducted our own empirical research on how the situations are perceived by civil society organisations. To develop the methodology for such a research, in cooperation with the Centre for German and European Studies (St. Petersburg State University – Bielefeld University), we organised a research workshop in St. Petersburg in April 2016, where the research team met with invited experts on civil society studies from both research institutions and CSOs from different countries. We are very grateful to all the participants of the workshop for their input, support and inspiration to use a combination of both quantitative online study and qualitative interviews on the perception of current situations among CSOs.

As a result of the common discussion, our research methodology was based on an online survey and in-depth interviews conducted in Russia and four EU countries: Germany and Spain as old EU member states, and Poland and Hungary as new EU members. All the

case studies were conducted by the researchers working in their countries using the same methodology. They analysed the data by placing them into the broader political, social and economic development of the respective country in 2016 and some trends leading to the year 2016 in the previous years. Every case study was also reviewed by at least two anonymous independent experts on these countries, who also contributed a lot for the better understanding of the cases.

We are very grateful to all the experts and advisors as well as to all the listeners of our first preliminary report presentations for their contributions, comments and critical points, which help us to improve our current and future reports. In subsequent years, we will present the situations in other countries and focus on further aspects and trends of civil society development. Already in 2017, the annual report will include results of the research on such cases as the Netherlands, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Russia.

We hope it will be of interest not only to civil society representatives but also for the broader public, donors and policy-makers both in the EU and Russia and elsewhere.

Kind regards,
State of Civil Society Report project team

OVERVIEW

By Elena Belokurova

The preparation of the Report on the State of Civil Society in the EU and Russia was initiated because of the wish of many members of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum to acquire more systematised information and assessments about NGOs and civil society development in different countries, especially in the EU member states. Even with cooperation, the civil society organisations from Russia and EU countries very often perceive each other's problems, challenges and strategies as dissimilar and incomparable. Moreover, they often think that their problems are unique. This is especially true of Russian organisations, which seem to be more difficult to compare with other countries. These gaps in the perception of real and potential partners hinder further cooperation and limit its potential. The research conducted for this report should help build mutual understanding and aid in the search for new avenues for cooperation and exchange opportunities.

Therefore, the civil society organisations compose the main target group of this report. Hopefully, the broader public and policy-makers of different levels both in the EU and Russia as well as a in other parts of the world will also find it interesting and beneficial.

Currently monitoring civil societies and their conditions in different countries is quite popular. In 2012, an interesting analysis of the global trends for CSOs around the world was presented as global synthesis "Civil Society at Crossroads: Shifts, Challenges, Options?", a collective reflection on the future of civil society prepared by a number of leading development and consulting international CSOs[1]. The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law regularly analyses the "Global Trends in NGO Law" affecting the CSOs development in different countries[2]. Recently, CIVICUS launched a new on-line monitoring system for civil society conditions throughout the world[3].

Many quantitative studies to measure different aspects of civil society development through various indices have so far achieved interesting results. A detailed overview with a special focus on the EU member states and Russia is presented in the first chapter of the report to show the opportunities and limits of such studies. Indeed, they can rate countries on certain aspects, which can give a quite interesting picture, but they cannot explain the causes and consequences, nor propose any solutions.

While working on this report, we tried to combine both academic and practical approaches to civil society studies in order to capture the main characteristics and trends of civil society development during the past year. Practically, our aim was to help with understanding the civil society conditions and agendas in different EU countries and Russia. We also wished to help advocates formulate arguments and strengthen self-awareness in the civil society sector, including its impact.

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1   Civil Society at Crossroads: shifts, challenges, options, available at: www.intrac.org/resources/civil-society-crossroads-shifts-challenges-options/
2   Global Trends in NGO Law. A quarterly review of NGO legal trends around the world, available at: www.icnl.org/research/trends/
3   Monitor Tracking Civic Space, available at: https://monitor.civicus.org/

We wanted not only to understand conditions, problems and challenges faced by civil societies in different countries but also to find interesting solutions, which could be useful for other countries and become a basis for cooperation.

Therefore, we asked civil society representatives in different countries what they saw as the main challenges and best responses. These research questions are reflected in the structure of the report: first, the methodology of an online survey and interviews is briefly described. Then, the overviews of the civil society sectors in different countries are provided, which focus on the official statistic, legal and financial situation of the civil society sector, as well as challenges faced by civil society organisations and their responses ("best practices").

Unfortunately, we could not do so in all the EU member states, and for this pilot report along with Russia we selected only four EU countries: two older member states (in the North, Germany, and in the South, Spain) and two newer member states (very active in the policy towards NGOs, Hungary, and starting to go in the same direction, Poland). In subsequent years, we will present the situations in other countries and focus on further aspects and trends of civil society development.

Methodology

The research methodology is based on the survey and interviews of representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs), which include both non-governmental and non-profit organisations (NGOs), informal initiatives, and social movements. Because we tried to include all kinds of civil society structures, we will speak mostly about CSOs, which is the broadest term, although the main focus is naturally on NGOs because of their easier identification and accessibility.

The survey was conducted in five countries (Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary and Russia) online from mid-July to mid-September 2016. The designed English-language questionnaire was translated into all native languages and distributed via the software Qualtrics or Google Forms.

Invitations to participate in the survey were sent to the personal e-mail addresses of CSO representatives in the corresponding countries. In addition, open invitations for the survey were distributed through relevant mailing lists and personal contacts. Furthermore, several announcements were made on the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum website.

In Germany, 692 personal invitations were sent out and 75 completed responses were collected from 14 July to 16 September 2016. Additionally, four interviews were conducted with the NGOs who expressed such a readiness.

In Spain, the basis for research was a survey conducted in 2015 with almost all the same questions, where 147 organisations were contacted again and answered additional questions. Moreover, 11 interviews were conducted, following the general schema.

In Poland, an invitation to participate in the survey was sent to nearly 200 NGOs, some of them being networks of other NGOs themselves, and 56 answers were collected in total. Later, in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of 10 chosen organisations, which had declared interest in taking part in this stage of research in their surveys.

In Hungary, the interest in the survey was higher, with 144 organisations filling in the questionnaire. Then, the interviews were conducted with 10 civil society organisations.
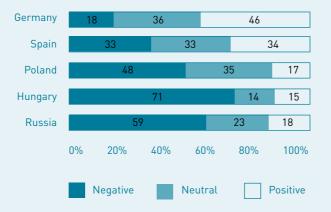
In Russia, 248 answers were received on the questionnaire, which was sent to the Russian members of the EU-Russia CSF and more than 900 other CSOs. Additionally, 11 interviews were conducted via Skype or telephone with the heads of NGOs or activists working in different fields and regions.

This relatively low response rate is explained by the specifics of the online survey and the time period when it was conducted: mid-July to mid-September is the most popular season for vacations in all the countries studied.

In general, because of this, a representative sample of CSOs cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, the results cannot be understood as representing the entire CSO sector or civil societies in these countries. They do express, however, the opinion of those CSOs who are active, interested, and motivated in understanding the general situation. Some of them are connected to the CSF, some not, but all of them do care about the conditions and CSO development in their countries. Therefore, their opinions are valuable and show general trends and visions, especially because the data comes not only from closed but also open questions, which provides more information and explanations.

The online survey consisted of six closed and three open questions (see the questionnaire in the Annex). Among six closed questions, four concerned background information on the organisation (field of activity, age of the organisation, as well as number of active members and level of activity), two questions dealt with perceived changes and challenges to the organisations based on six dimensions (state funding, private donations, public opinion, legal situation, voluntary engagement, and media reporting). Two open questions asked about the respondents' perceptions of the challenges for civil society organisations in general, for their organisations in particular and about the organisation's experiences with "best practices".

After the survey, semi-structured interviews with the same guide were held with respondents who indicated that they would be willing to give an interview. Usually, they took about 40 to 60 minutes and covered the following topics: (1) challenges to CSOs in the country in general, (2) challenges to the specific organisation, and (3) best practices developed by the organisation. The interviews were conducted personally, via telephone or Skype, and were recorded. In the text, the citations from the interviews and answers to the open survey questions are presented anonymously.
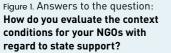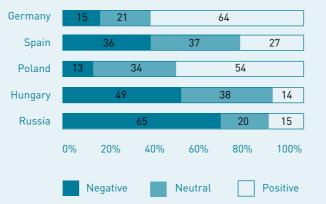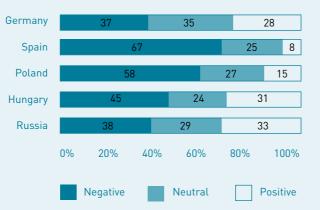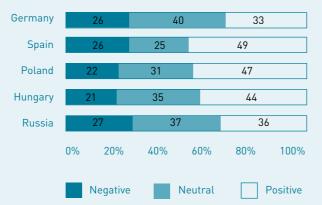
Figure 1. Answers to the question: **How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to state support?**

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Germany	18	36	46
Spain	33	33	34
Poland	48	35	17
Hungary	71	14	15
Russia	59	23	18

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

Figure 2. Answers to the question: **How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to legal framework?**

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Germany	15	21	64
Spain	36	37	27
Poland	13	34	54
Hungary	49	38	14
Russia	65	20	15

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

Figure 3. Answers to the question: **How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to private donations?**

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Germany	37	35	28
Spain	67	25	8
Poland	58	27	15
Hungary	45	24	31
Russia	38	29	33

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

Figure 4. Answers on the question: **How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to media coverage?**

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Germany	26	40	33
Spain	26	25	49
Poland	22	31	47
Hungary	21	35	44
Russia	27	37	36

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

Challenges for CSOs: similar or different?

As a result of the survey research, in all the countries, financial challenges emerged as being the biggest obstacle, although to different extents and for different reasons. Thus, in Spain the most important reason is connected with the economic crisis. In Germany previously stable state funding is being reduced. In Hungary and Russia barriers are created for getting foreign funding. In Hungary and Poland access to EU funding is hindered by the government. But in spite of these differences, for CSOs it means reduction of traditional financial sources and a need to search for new ones.

In all the cases, state support for CSOs is also reduced by economic crises and state attempts to control the CSOs. Thus, Figure 1 demonstrates mostly negative conditions for Hungary, Russia and Poland, and a better situation in Germany and Spain.

Another aspect of the state policy towards NGOs is included in the question about the legal framework for CSOs, which was also evaluated in the survey (Figure 2). Here, the recent reforms are quite obviously evaluated negatively by Russian and Hungarian CSOs, while German and Polish CSOs still see the legal framework mostly as stable and friendly.

Private donations became a very important source of CSO financing with the diminishing of traditional sources, but there are still many problems. Figure 3 shows that the situation with private donations is also very difficult everywhere, including economically more prosperous Germany. It is even surprising that the situation in Russia and Hungary looks better than in other countries. Probably it is connected with the fact that these countries had already faced serious challenges several years ago and started fundraising more from private sources earlier than the others.

While having different challenges, CSOs surprisingly evaluate the media coverage similarly. Some organisations speak about the smear campaigns to discredit them organised by governments in Russia, Hungary and Poland, but it is not so strongly seen in the quantitative data in Figure 4.

As a result, public opinion towards CSOs looks quite positive, but again, in Russia, Hungary and Poland the consequences of the smear campaigns against some CSOs are visible in Figure 5.

In addition to the main challenges, there were also problems connected to public opinion. In the EU countries, the problem of discriminatory / hate speech has become one of the most important, which creates both a challenge for CSOs and a need to act more strongly. It is again about Poland, Hungary and Russia, but also Germany, which has been challenged by the influx of refugees.

Finally, because of state pressure and financial reductions, volunteering has become important as a mechanism to counter these shortages. Therefore, here in Figure 6 we see an opposite situation: a better evaluation of volunteering in Hungary and Russia compared to Poland and to some extent also Spain and Germany. In general, a lot is said about challenges, such as organisational problems and the need for better communication. Yet at the same time, CSOs under pressure intensify their work with people, target groups and volunteers, and try to increase their support. This also is a possible explanation for the better evaluation of volunteers and efforts among these countries.

Figure 5. Answers to the question: **How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to public opinion?**

Country	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Germany	15	23	62
Spain	16	18	66
Poland	20	38	43
Hungary	18	35	47
Russia	22	32	46

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

Figure 6. Answers to the question: **How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to volunteering?**

Country	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Germany	13	24	63
Spain	17	16	67
Poland	15	40	45
Hungary	8	6	86
Russia	6	33	61

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

As a result of these challenges, a lot of CSO representatives have spoken about the "closing space" for CSOs and how the policies of populist governments towards NGOs create a division between CSOs: those loyal to the governments and those critical towards it. In Russia, this division started to appear some years ago, and for the past two years, it has been an agenda in Hungary. Obviously, Poland will soon follow this path. Corresponding case studies show in their respective chapters how it happens.

At the same time, this changing situation creates not only challenges but also opportunities for CSOs' development. Thus, in the interviews and open questions, such opportunities were mentioned in almost all the countries studied. These include opportunities to rethink their own missions, strategies, and target groups, to look for innovations and creative solutions, to become closer to people, target groups and to each other, to find independence and diversification, to learn from and improve communication with people, target groups, volunteers and colleagues. After reading the responses in the open questions and interviews, the lasting impression is that now is a very important time for CSOs in different countries. Challenges are rising at varying speeds but are felt everywhere to some extent.

Best practices: similar or different?

Some positive trends have already been mentioned, such as an increase in volunteers and supporters, CSOs keeping a generally positive image, and CSOs strengthening their ability to adapt.

Current difficulties were often seen as opportunities to rethink mission and strategies to look for innovations; to become closer to target groups and to each other; to find independence and diversification; to learn a lot; and to improve communication with people across the board.

All these challenges are reflected by the CSOs, who try to develop practices that could contribute to overcoming the crises. Detailed descriptions of some best practices are given in the respective chapters of the report, but they can be summarised as follows:

→ Cooperation is mentioned by the CSOs in all the countries, meaning collaborating within the sector and in the inter-sectoral dimension;

→ Consolidation is emphasised mainly by those CSOs who are under pressure, especially in Russia, Hungary, Poland;

→ Search for new financing opportunities, such as the collection of private donations, crowdfunding, and social entrepreneurship;

→ New practices of communication and public relations, linked to social networks, new informational technologies, such as blogs and interactive informational resources;

→ New technologies for better management and strategy building.

These and other new practices are already being developed and implemented. How the CSOs adapt to the new times, including concrete examples, is presented for every selected case in the corresponding parts of each report chapter.

Structure of the Report

As already mentioned, the first chapter analyses the quantitative data of the numerous studies carried out by different research institutions to evaluate levels of civil society development in the EU member states and Russia. The goal is to see general trends in regard to all the EU countries because of the impossibility of presenting the detailed case studies of all of them.

After this general introduction, selected cases are analysed in the corresponding articles written by researchers living in the respective countries and who have been involved in the relevant fields and studies for many years while working in universities and research centres specialising in civil society studies. Therefore, in analysing the data, they used their previous knowledge and research results. This provided interesting and detailed explanations of the various contexts, especially concerns with recent political and social transformations and changes in legal frameworks and financial situations of CSOs.

After these overviews, the authors present their data and research results on the main and current challenges for CSOs as well as best practices and strategies mentioned by CSOs. This is the structure in all the country chapters, which reflect the overviews of previous comparative research on civil society organisations in the EU member states and Russia.

The cases – Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary and Russia – are presented in this order to reflect the results of the studies. They found that state pressures on CSOs as well as the challenges are increasing in this order. The situation in Russia looks the most challenging, while Hungary and Poland are moving in a similar direction. Spain and Germany are not so pressured by the state but have their own specific challenges. Thus, we start with the most favourable situation for CSOs and proceed to the more difficult cases.

In general, because this report is the first pilot edition in a series of annual Reports on the State of Civil Society on the EU and Russia, comments and proposals for further topics and member states to be studied are welcome.

MEASURING THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EU MEMBER STATES AND RUSSIA

By Andrey Demidov

The idea that civil society is an extremely fuzzy, ambiguous and multi-dimensional concept has become a well-known axiom for any research on civil society. Its problematic and fluid character, however, does not stop researchers and practitioners from trying to measure the state of civil society and its development with a number of indicators. The following section summarises and discusses the data on the state of civil society across the EU member states and Russia provided by two groups of indicators: ones that measure the strength of civil society associations and those that measure and assess civic engagement and participation of citizens. The section presents and discusses the available data for various periods of time as well as advantages and disadvantages of the use of available indicators. The first part reviews the existing indices while the second part summarises the available data for each of the indices. The third part, followed by discussions, briefly assesses the recent legal trends in NGOs/CSOs development.

Overview of existing methods, techniques and tools

Civil society has never been an easy phenomenon to grasp, let alone to measure. Civil society remains an ambiguous idea because there are many completely opposing views on what civil society is and who belongs to it (NGOs, sport clubs, grass-root organisations, trade unions, etc.).

However, despite persistent conceptual and empirical ambiguity around civil society, since the 1990s there have been continuous attempts to measure its state and health (Kocka, 2004). Scholars and practitioners have been trying to elaborate comprehensive and somewhat simplified tools and indicators that could help to assess the state of development of civil society across countries and trace its evolution over time. The result of this effort is a number of indicators, most frequently referred as "indices" that claim to measure different dimensions and faces of civil society.

All existing measurements can be tentatively divided into two groups. The main criterion for division is conceptual – the measurements differ in terms of *what dimension or manifestation* of civil society they try to capture (Fioramonti & Kononykhina, 2015). Without going too far into one of the most difficult questions of political thought, namely *what is civil society*, it can be argued that the existing indicators reflect two main conceptualisations[4] of civil society: (1) civil society as an arena of associational activity of citizens, and (2) civil society as a certain level of civic engagement/participation.

In the first reading, civil society is defined as various independent, more or less institutionalised citizens' associations that work for public purposes and, in this sense, are differ-

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4   Scholars and practitioners oftentimes discuss weakness/strength of civil society from the perspective of how friendly or welcoming political, social, economic, or cultural environments are for associational activities and civic engagement/participation.

ent from both the state bodies and private for-profit organisations (Kocka, 2004). It is the strength, operational sustainability, resourcefulness and capacities of these associations (NGOs, CSOs, etc.) that the first group of measurement tools assesses when evaluating the state or health of civil society.

In the second reading, civil society surfaces through how citizens act and behave rather than how they organise themselves as well as what norms they share and whether these norms underpin their actions (Arato & Cohen, 1992). In accordance with this view, the second group of measurement tools evaluates the frequency or popularity of certain phenomena, such as volunteering, donating and membership in various voluntary (often, grassroot or neighbourhood) associations. These activities are oftentimes conceptualised as civic engagement or civic participation.

It should be noted that this division is purely analytical. In practice, there have been attempts to develop more or less comprehensive tools that capture all three dimensions or even additional ones. This ambition, for instance, guided elaborators of the three main "indices" of civil society: NGO (CSO) Sustainability Index, CIVICUS Civil Society Index, and (Johns Hopkins University) Global Civil Society Index. Although focusing mainly on NGOs or CSOs as the core empirical manifestations of civil society, these indices also take a complex approach and include measurements of, for instance, how actively citizens volunteer or how enabling the environment in a certain country is. In this report, the data provided by these indices will be used to assess the state of NGOs/CSOs' development across the EU member states and Russia. The second group of measurement tools can be found in both larger surveys of social values such as World and European Values Survey or in more specific surveys such as Eurobarometer Social Capital, Political Participation or Volunteering surveys or the World Giving Index.

Strength of NGOs/CSOs in the EU and Russia

The three most-known indices that measure strength and sustainability of NGOs/CSOs are NGO (CSO) Sustainability Index, CIVICUS Civil Society Index and Global Civil Society Index. All indices contain data on some of the EU member states and Russia although not all of them measure NGO/CSOs strength in all 29 countries (EU28 + Russia), let alone over the same periods of time. This obviously makes a consistent comparison across space and time difficult, yet they provide some relevant data for analysis.

Global Civil Society Index

The Global Civil Society Index, developed by the scholars working for the Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project at Johns Hopkins University and launched in 2004, comprises data about NGOs/CSOs across 45 countries along three main dimensions: capacity, sustainability and impact (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2004). All three dimensions are measured through strictly quantitative indicators. It is one of the distinct features of this Index compared to the other two that rely on experts' evaluations rather than available numerical data.

The capacity dimension is measured through such indicators as the size of the non-profit sector (number of NGOs/CSOs), the proportion of civil society employees out of the entire working population, the percentage of people volunteering and the economic value that this volunteering generates. The sustainability dimension is constituted by the data on the sources of revenues (structure and size of expenditure) for NGOs/CSOs as well as their absolute value in USD and share of GDP. Finally, the impact dimension measures the contribution that NGOs/CSOs make to social, economic and political life. The Index itself is a simple number on a continuum from 0 to 100; higher numeric values show "stronger" civil society. Each country is assigned a final value, an arithmetic mean of numeric values for three dimensions.

Table 1 summarises the data for 34 countries collected before 2004. The table does not include the data on Russia. Moreover, out of 28 member states the table contains data on 16 of them (although Romania was not yet an EU member in 2004). The table, however, depicts several trends also supported by other quantitative and qualitative research. What is clearly visible from the data are several geographical divides between the EU member states in terms of NGO/CSO strength. One can see that countries from the "Northern tier", namely Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, Ireland and Belgium (and Finland, which scored 49) are among the most successful performers in terms of the strength of NGO sector, followed by the countries from the "Continental" tier, namely Germany, France, Spain and perhaps Austria.

One can also see that Central and Eastern European EU members, namely, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Romania score quite low compared to the two above-mentioned groups. Interestingly, the Italian NGO sector also scores rather low, grouping Italy with the CEE member states. Thus, the Index largely corroborates a well-known thesis about East-West and West-South divide in capacities, sustainability and impact of the NGO/CSO sector in Europe with Western/Northern countries scoring much higher than their Eastern and Southern counterparts in terms of the size of the sector, its resourcefulness and influence.

Some scholars have evaluated the Global Society Index critically, primarily for its not showing the diversity of civil society and instead portraying an excessively economistic view of civil society as such (Fioramonti & Kononykhina, 2015). More precisely, the index is blamed for the de-politicisation of the notion of civil society as it does not take into consideration the peculiarities of the political context in which NGOs/CSOs have to function. Rather, it looks at NGOs/CSOs exclusively in terms of their contribution to a country's economic growth as producers and providers of services. The index also does not attend to peculiarities of the inner functioning of NGOs/CSOs, a dimension crucial for complex understanding how NGOs/CSOs develop in terms of strength and sustainability.

CIVICUS Civil Society Index

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index seems to be better-equipped to address these gaps. The index sees civil society as an arena for collective action populated by various groups and individuals. It also does not equate civil society with a certain type of organisation. Most importantly, it views civil society as a fluid and continuously evolving phenomenon, and it incorporates this idea into its methodology of data collection (expert interviews, focus groups and stakeholders' meetings). Its methodology is thus suitable for capturing and

Country	Capacity	Sustainability	Impact	Total
Netherlands	79	54	89	74
Norway	55	82	59	65
United States	76	54	54	61
Sweden	58	56	67	60
United Kingdom	66	60	50	58
Israel	70	42	50	54
Belgium	65	45	60	57
Ireland	64	45	52	54
Australia	51	46	49	49
France	56	46	44	49
Finland	48	42	50	47
Germany	47	45	47	46
Spain	54	37	30	40
Argentina	48	35	36	40
Tanzania	45	32	38	39
Uganda	44	37	30	37
Japan	38	34	35	36
South Africa	44	35	33	37
South Korea	32	38	36	35
Austria	35	42	34	37
Kenya	41	28	29	33
Italy	38	37	25	33
Hungary	38	32	20	30
Czech Republic	34	35	25	31
Colombia	37	26	22	28
Brazil	30	31	26	29
Peru	32	30	22	28
Philippines	30	35	17	27
Poland	30	38	7	25
Slovakia	32	28	13	24
India	27	30	20	26
Mexico	23	29	19	24
Romania	27	26	14	22
Pakistan	26	19	12	19

Source: Chapter 2 in Lester M. Salamon, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, and Associates, Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Non-profit Sector, Volume Two (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2004).

Table 1. Global Civil Society Index, 2004

demonstrating the evolution rather than focusing on a static picture. Finally, it is receptive to the vision that civil society is also a complex of values and norms, shared by both NGOs/CSOs in their work and other actors such as the state and the market actors or ordinary citizens (Malena & Heinrich, 2005, 2012).

There have been two waves of measurements for the index, the wave of 2004-08 and 2008-11. During the first wave, the state of civil society in a particular country was evaluated along four dimensions of structure, environment, impact and values. For the second wave the methodology was revised, and the number of dimensions increased – level of organisation (former structure), civic engagement, practices of values (former values), perception

of impact and external environment. All dimensions are measured using a wide number of indicators, both qualitative and quantitative.[5]

Table 2 illustrates which sub-dimensions are used to constitute the major four dimensions as well as showing some of the indicators.[6] The index adopts a more comprehensive approach to evaluating the health of civil society and assesses performance of NGOs/CSOs from a relational (networks, cooperation, etc.), value and potential impact perspectives. The downside of this comprehensive approach is the lack of available data caused by the complex process of data collection.

Table 3 summarises the data collected in the course of the first wave of measurement conducted before 2004. The table brings together data for 13 EU member states (the UK represented by Scotland and Wales) and Russia. Each country is assigned a numeric value from 0 to 3 with the higher figure indicating a higher level of civil society development.[7]

The data largely confirms the East-West and North-South division patterns with Central and Eastern and Southern EU member states and Russia scoring lower compared to their Western counterparts. An interesting observation is that these so-called low-ranking countries, nevertheless, score rather high on the *values* dimension and, what is relevant for Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia, quite high on the *impact* dimension. Russia is also higher in terms of *values*. In Russia's case, this dimension has acquired the highest ranking.

On the other hand, out of Central and Eastern European countries, Slovenia represents an interesting outlier as a country with a highly developed civil society, scoring very high on all four dimensions. This observation is largely corroborated by other research and measurements that register Slovenia's high ranking compared to other Central and Eastern European countries.

Overall, the main trend for these countries is quite stable and good *external environment*, still weak *structure*, high scoring on *values* and, interestingly, pretty high scoring on *impact* dimension. The latter is especially relevant for Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia yet not relevant for Southern European states such as Greece, Croatia, Cyprus and Italy. One disclaimer should be made to understand this trend better – measurement of the impact is done through measurement of perceptions (the revised methodology for the second wave explicitly renames this dimension from "impact" to "perceptions of impact"). In real terms, this means that respondents in these three countries assess the impact of the NGOs/CSOs sector much more positively than the existing environment or structure, a trend that is not observed for Russia.

5   The data is collected from multiple sources. These include available statistical information, consultations with stakeholders, citizen and stakeholder surveys, media review, etc.
6   The total number of indicators for all four dimensions is 74 (Malena & Heinrich, 2012). The indicators get aggregated into sub-dimensions scores, and finally in dimensions scores. The Index visually presents its data in the form of a diamond.
7   For the second wave of measurement, the new numeric scale from 0 to 100 was adopted.

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Indicators
Structure	Breadth and depth of citizens' participation	Charitable giving
	Diversity of civil society participants	CSO membership
	Level of organisations	Volunteer work and community action
	Relations between NGOs/CSOs	Representation of social groups among CSO members and among CSO leadership
	Resources	Existence and effectiveness of umbrella bodies
		Self-regulation within CSOs
		Financial and human resources
Values	Democracy	Democratic practices within CSOs
	Transparency	Corruption within CSOs
	Gender equality	Financial transparency of CSOs
	Environmental sustainability	
	Non-violence	
	Tolerance	
Impact	Influence on public policy	Social and human rights impact
	Responding to social needs	Budget impact
	Empowering citizens	Public trust in CSOs
	Meeting societal needs	Informing citizens
	Holding state accountable	
Environment	Private- and state-civil society relations	Political competition
	Legal environment	Corruption
	Socio-cultural context	State effectiveness
	Socio-economic context	Decentralisation
	Basic freedoms and rights	Ethnic/religious conflicts
	Political context	Trust
		Tax and registration laws for CSOs
		Dialogue between the state and CSOs

Table 2. CIVICUS Civil Society Index Indicators

Country	Structure	Environment	Values	Impact	Total
Croatia	1,7	1,9	1,9	1,5	1,7
Cyprus	1,3	2,1	1,9	1,8	1,7
Czech Republic	1,7	2,1	1,4	2,4	1,9
Germany	1,8	2,5	2,5	2,6	2,3
Greece	0,9	2,1	2,1	1,3	1,6
Italy	1,4	2,2	2,5	2,3	2,1
Netherlands	2,1	2,5	2,1	1,6	2,0
Northern Ireland	1,8	2,4	2,1	1,8	2,0
Poland	1,2	1,7	2,1	2,1	1,7
Romania	1,3	1,8	1,9	1,6	1,6
Russia	1,1	1,1	1,5	1,2	1,2
Scotland	2,2	2,4	2,6	2,4	2,4
Slovenia	2,2	2,4	2,6	2,4	2,4
Wales	1,9	2,3	2,5	2,7	2,3

Table 3. CIVICUS Civil Society Index,
First wave of measurement 2004
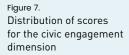
Source: www.civicus.org

CIVICUS Civil Society index for post-communist states, Russia, and non-EU members

Comparing the Index for Russia with the data on the EU member states might not adequately reflect the situation with civil society in Russia because of the obvious selection bias – the Russian Index is incomparably low. The data collected during the second wave of measurements in 2008-11 allows for a more nuanced picture of where Russia stands in terms of civil society development. The main reason for this is that the absolute majority of the EU member states were excluded from the second wave measurements. Figures[8] 7 to 12 demonstrate the scores for all five dimensions of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index and the additional dimension of trust in civil society for 11 countries, including Russia and 4 EU member states.

The data shown above largely confirms the low ranking of Russia in terms of civil society development, not only compared to the EU member states but also to some of the CIS countries and non-EU members such as Turkey, Albania and Kosovo. On the *organisational dimension, practices of values and levels of trust* in civil society, Russia scores the lowest out of 11 countries. Its highest ranking so far is on the dimension of the *perception of impact*. Taking into account the measurement methodology adopted for the index, this signifies that Russian civil society experts assess the degree of civil society impact in more positive terms than experts from countries with allegedly strong civil society, such as Slovenia.

8   Cutting the diamonds. A first look at the quantitative data of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index, 2008-2011, available at: http://www.civicus.org/downloads/CSI/Cutting_the_Diamonds_final_JH_OK%20af%202.pdf

Figure 7.
Distribution of scores for the civic engagement dimension
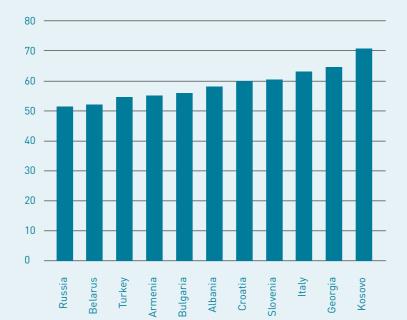

Figure 8.
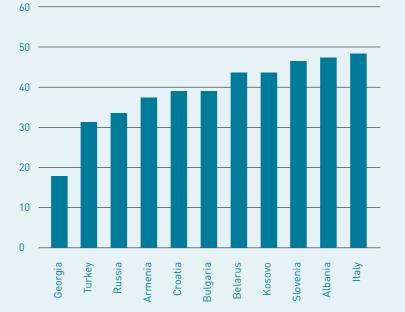Distribution of scores for the level of organisation dimension

Figure 9.
Distribution of values for the practice of values dimension
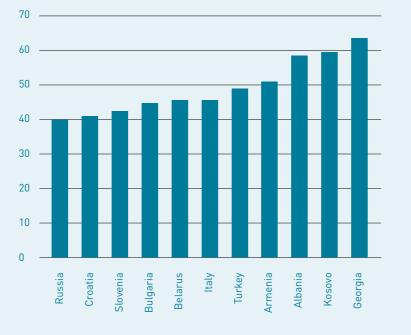

Figure 10.
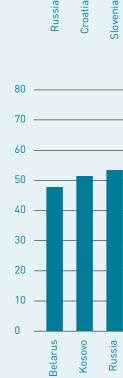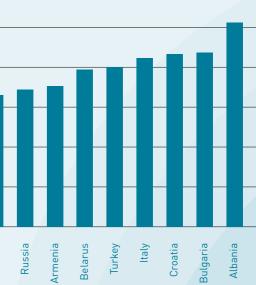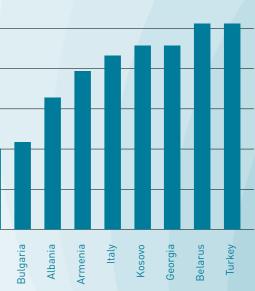Distribution of scores for the perception of impact dimension

Figure 11.
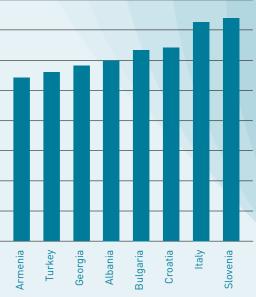Distribution of scores for the levels of trust in civil society

Figure 12.
Distribution of scores for the external environment dimensiona

NGOs (CSOs) Sustainability Index

The Index developed in 1997 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in cooperation with the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law is the oldest index. The measurements piloted in 1997 and afterward have been conducted without interruption. One peculiarity of the index is that it measures NGOs/CSO sustainability for a larger category of post-communist states that includes Eastern European and CIS countries.

The index relies on qualitative data collected through expert interviews and focus groups. Normally a panel of at least eight experts representing diverse NGOs/CSOs in a particular country is asked to evaluate NGO/CSOs' performance along seven dimensions: *legal environment, organisational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure and public image*. Invited experts are asked to rate each dimension on a scale from 1 to 7 with a score of 1 indicating a very advanced NGOs/CSOs sector and a score of 7 indicating a fragile and unsustainable sector. Table 4 summarises the results of the conducted measurements for the period from 1997 to 2015.

Table 4 groups countries into three main clusters. Whereas the average score (2.7 for the Northern tier, 3.7 for the Southern and 4.5 for Eurasia tier) allows for such groupings, one can see that the place of Hungary in the first group can already be questioned as the results demonstrate that the Hungarian ranking is somewhat closer to one of the countries from the Southern tier. The Hungarian data illustrates a progressive deterioration of the situation with NGOs/CSO sustainability starting from 2011, the second year of the current right-wing government being in power. The rest of the Northern tier demonstrates overall stability or even slight improvement of the situation with NGOs/CSOs.

The data on Russia shows the same deteriorating dynamics, with the year of 2015 marking a peak in the drop of NGO/CSO sustainability. The Russian data shows a general progressive downturn of the situation over the years. The report "The 2015 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia" suggests the enactment of even stricter laws on independent CSOs as the major factor that impedes CSOs sustainability and drives down the whole Index for Russia. The drop of the numeric score for the legal environment has directly affected other dimensions.

Financial viability, as the existing laws prevent the Russian NGOs/CSOs from obtaining foreign funding and organisational capacity, also went down as many NGOs/CSOs announced the suspension of many of their activities because of stricter legal requirements. Public image is another dimension that demonstrates overall deterioration of the situation. The public perception of NGOs/CSOs, as the report indicates, clearly suffered from the organised federal propaganda campaign. The only dimension that demonstrates no change or, rather, stable continuity, is service provision.

To sum up, the data provided by three major civil society indices brings to light several trends in development of NGOs/CSOs across the EU member states and Russia. One of the major findings, also explored in the existing research on civil society, is the geographical division between East and West and North and South in terms of the strength of NGOs. Existing data corroborates the assumption that NGOs/CSOs in the Central and Eastern member states are weaker than their Western counterparts, be it in organisational terms or financial viability and access to other resources. However, recent measurements also question this conventional picture, as also argued by some authoritative scholars of civil society.

NORTHERN TIER

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Czech Republic	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.4	N/R	N/R	N/R
Estonia	2.0	2.0	2.0	2	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.4	N/R	N/R	N/R
Hungary	3.4	3.4	3.2	3	N/A	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.0	1.6	2.3
Latvia	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.8	N/R	4.2	3.6
Lithuania	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.0	4.0
Poland	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.8
Slovakia	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.8	2.8
Slovenia	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.4	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Average	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.7	2.9

SOUTHERN TIER

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Albania	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.2	4.4
BiH	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.9	5.2	5.6	N/R
Bulgaria	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.6	3.7	4.0	3.6	4.0
Croatia	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.3	4.7	4.4	4.6
Kosovo	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.4	N/R	N/R
Macedonia	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.4
Montenegro	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.6	N/R	N/R
Romania	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.6
Serbia	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.5	5.4	5.4	4.8
Average	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.3

EURASIA: Russia, West NIS, and Caucasus

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Armenia	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.4	5.0	5.1	5.5	N/R
Azerbaijan	5.8	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.2	4.9	5.0	5.7	6.4	N/R
Belarus	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.5	5.7	N/R	N/R	N/R
Georgia	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.4	N/R
Moldova	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.6	N/R	N/R	N/R
Russia	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.4	3.4
Ukraine	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.0
Average	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.6	3.7

Table 4. NGO (CSO) Sustainability Index Country scores 1997-2015

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Poland	1.50	1.25	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Cz. Rep	1.50	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Albania	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Armenia	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Belarus	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.00	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.25
Bosnia and Hercegovina	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Bulgaria	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.25
Croatia	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.75	2.75	2.75
Estonia	2.00	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Hungary	1.50	1.50	1.75	1.75	2.00	2.00	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.50
Georgia	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Kosovo	4.25	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75
Latvia	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Lithuania	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Macedonia	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.25
Moldova	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
Montenegro	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
Romania	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.25
Russia	5.25	5.50	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.25	5.50	5.75	6.00	6.25
Serbia	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25
Slovakia	1.50	1.50	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Slovenia	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Ukraine	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.25	2.25

Table 5. Civil society dimension scores, Nations in Transit, 2007-2016

Source: Nations in Transit 2016, available at: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_NIT2016_Final_FWeb.pdf

Country	Social trust	Volunteering any	Volunteering org	Social capital index
Sweden	0,65	0,93	2,80	1,82
Denmark	0,75	0,90	2,38	1,79
Netherlands	0,62	0,84	2,21	1,37
Finland	0,61	0,76	1,53	.93
Luxembourg	0,31	0,78	1,87	.58
The UK	0,36	0,56	1,06	.38
Ireland	0,34	0,59	1,07	.36
Austria	0,33	0,59	1,02	.34
Belgium	0,30	0,58	1,14	.34
Germany	0,34	0,56	0,98	.33
Slovenia	0,24	0,57	0,94	.23
France	0,22	0,56	0,90	.20
Spain	0,36	0,29	0,46	.17
Estonia	0,33	0,37	0,53	.17
Malta	0,22	0,44	0,73	.16
Italy	0,22	0,33	0,48	.11
Cyprus	0,19	0,39	0,60	.11
Portugal	0,24	0,25	0,32	.08
Czech Rep	0,17	0,36	0,47	.08
Hungary	0,25	0,21	0,26	.07
Slovakia	0,16	0,38	0,42	.07
Greece	0,18	0,26	0,31	.06
Latvia	0,15	0,27	0,35	.05
Lithuania	0,14	0,22	0,28	.04
Romania	0,17	0,19	0,24	.04
Bulgaria	0,20	0,16	0,18	.04
Poland	0,10	0,25	0,34	.03
EU15	0,33	0,51	0,93	.31
EU25	0,30	0,47	0,82	.25
NMS10	0,15	0,28	0,38	.06

Table 6. Social capital index in the EU

Source: Social cohesion, trust and participation: social capital, social policy and social cohesion in the European Union and the Candidate countries, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_situation/docs/2006_mon_rep_soc_cap.pdf

In particular, NGOs in countries such as Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and Czech Republic seem to be not explicitly weaker than those in some Southern countries such as Italy, Greece, Cyprus or Portugal. Some scholars argue that, from a strictly organisational perspective, over the years the NGO/CSOs sector in the so-called "East" has evolved hugely, and the division between democratic West and post-communist East is no longer in place (Ekiert & Kubik, 2014; Kutter & Trappmann, 2010; Lane, 2010; Ost, 2011).

Moreover, the so-called East is becoming increasingly differentiated because of, for instance, backsliding of democracy in countries like Hungary and increasing differentiation in terms of regime types in the CIS countries. The data on civil society development (organisational dimension) collected by Freedom House (Table 5) over the years points to a different division, this time between the cluster of "Western Balkans" and "Russia & Caucasus" and the rest of Eastern Europe.

The next section discusses the data on another dimension of civil society in the EU and Russia – civic engagement – to illustrate the existing trends.

State of civic engagement and participation

There are no long-existing comprehensive indicators that would measure the state of civic engagement, not least because of ambiguity as to what civic engagement means. Up to this point, attempts to measure the state of civic engagement were made along with the effort to measure social capital. Civic engagement would be a part of larger indices of social capital, such as those elaborated by the World Bank or OECD. These indices would look at civic engagement as membership of voluntary associations or time spent by citizens volunteering. However, compared to the organisational dimension of civil society, the data on civic engagement is more diverse, mostly because of its longer history of being studied.

The Eurobarometer social capital survey

There have been several attempts to evaluate the state of social capital in the EU. In 2004 Eurobarometer conducted a special survey on social capital measuring all main dimensions: trust, associational membership and volunteering. Table 5 summarises the weighted statistical data. It shows the scores for social capital index for the EU27. Those scores bring together the scores for social trust and volunteering. The "social trust" variable shows the percentage of people believing that other people can be trusted, the "volunteering any" variable shows the percentage of respondents who engage in any volunteering activities whereas the "volunteering org" variable shows the number of voluntary organisations (NGOs/CSOs) to which a respondent belongs or is a member of.

Table 6 draws a well-known picture of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands being the most trusting and social capital-rich countries where populations are willing and ready to engage in volunteering. The gaps between the EU15 and the new member states are quite wide on all dimensions, although some of the latter (Estonia and Slovenia) can be considered as representing the stable middle section in terms of social capital. The Southern member states are also closer to the EU10 in these terms.

Apart from these general descriptive statistics, the Eurobarometer survey provides a comprehensive analysis of correlations between these indicators of civic engagement and other phenomena, such as access to public services, satisfaction with these services, life satisfaction, etc. The major finding is the strong connection between the levels of social capital and certain attitudes, such as trust in public institutions, satisfaction with public services or satisfaction with the functioning of democracy. Because social capital is being measured as a percentage of those involved in volunteering or members of associations, then the data confirms the trend that civil society generally weakens from West to East. In this respect, this data fits into the picture drawn by the indices of NGO/CSO sustainability.

The World Giving Index

The World Giving Index published by CAF is, to this date, the only comprehensive index elaborated to systematically measure the "giving" behaviour of citizens across a wide range of countries. It pulls together the data along three main dimensions – *helping a stranger, donating money and time spent volunteering*. It ranks countries according to the highest aggregate value for these dimensions. Table 7 summarises the data for the EU member states and Russia over six years.

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Austria	10	29	28	15	17	23
Belgium	50	54	54	57	52	48
Bulgaria	141	145	137	118	126	115
Croatia	119	149	132	133	130	62
Cyprus	50	28	21	24	23	42
Czech Republic	81	94	98	103	112	130
Denmark	18	17	10	25	18	39
Estonia	121	130	79	93	103	99
Finland	45	21	17	33	25	31
France	91	80	54	77	90	74
Germany	18	26	34	22	28	20
Greece	147	151	145	135	120	140
Hungary	121	127	94	78	72	124
Ireland	3	2	2	5	4	9
Italy	29	104	57	21	79	72
Latvia	115	118	74	93	89	110
Lithuania	147	143	105	120	119	142
Luxembourg	`25	21	28	28	65	33
Malta	13	19	21	12	16	12
Netherlands	7	6	6	8	12	7
Poland	81	74	94	84	115	78
Portugal	129	127	119	71	78	82
Romania	142	118	119	105	108	93
Russian Federation	138	130	127	123	126	129
Slovakia	112	113	79	101	94	123
Slovenia	62	36	34	44	34	37
Spain	91	83	72	57	62	58
Sweden	45	40	37	39	40	28
United Kingdom	8	5	8	6	7	6

Table 7. World Giving Index scores 2010-2015   Source: www.cafonline.org

The table also shows that the pictures drawn by indices that measure the organisational strength of NGOs and by this index are quite different. On the one hand, it can be seen that in the EU case, the Central and Eastern member states represent the category where helping a stranger, donating or volunteering are noticeably less widespread than in their Western counterparts with the exception of Slovenia. Some countries like the Czech Republic or Lithuania even demonstrate a negative trend. On the other hand, some countries traditionally associated with weak civic engagement traditions, such as Romania, show quite a steady improvement. Interestingly, Russia can be considered as another example of the positive trends, as the table shows.

Overall, the differences in citizens' civic engagement support the idea that ex-communist countries have become more divergent. It is now difficult to proceed with the assumption that Central and Eastern Europe is a homogenous space of "weak civil society" (Lane, 2010).

The so-called "West" is not that homogenous either. The table demonstrates that the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands constitute the group of the most "giving" countries, a result quite different from the conventional view that the Nordic countries are the most social capital-rich nations.

A comparative overview

The data on volunteering collected by the Eurobarometer provides a more nuanced picture, due mainly to visible differences across the member states in what is considered as volunteering and various concepts of the voluntary sector. However, the Eurobarometer surveys[9] register the following trends. First, around 24% of Europeans regularly get engaged in voluntary work. In contrast, in Russia, according to two waves of measurements of European Value Survey conducted in 1999 and 2008, the percentage of citizens who regularly engage in voluntary work is correspondingly 7.7% and 5.2%.

Second, as for the divergence between the member states, the countries with the highest number of volunteers are the Netherlands (57%), Denmark (43%), and Finland (39%), whereas the bottom five countries are: Greece (14%), Romania (14%), Bulgaria (12%), Portugal (12%) and Poland (9%). The geographical pattern is quite mixed. Slovenia (34%), Slovakia (29%), Czech Republic (23%) and Estonia (30%), for instance, rank quite high in terms of volunteering. On the other hand, the UK (23%), Sweden (21%) and Spain (15%) rank surprisingly low, especially when compared to the previously discussed World Giving Index.

Third, volunteering in NGOs comes only third (16%), giving way to volunteering in cultural (20%) and sports (24%) organisations. Volunteering for environmental organisations, those protecting the rights of minorities or community and neighbourhood organisations are even lower. This trend partially supports a popular notion in social capital research, namely that civic engagement mostly takes the form of engagement with less-professional and less-institutionalised (non-NGO-like) associations. Fourth, solidarity and humanitarian aid (37%), healthcare (32%), and education (22%) represent the areas that are most attractive for European volunteers.

Legal and governance conditions: enabling environment for NGOs/CSOs?

A look at the organisational capacities of NGOs/CSOs, financial sustainability or membership base highlights the trends in NGO/CSO development across countries and over time. However, the analysis would not be complete without assessing the degree of support of the environment in which NGOs/CSOs (and civil society, in general) operate.

A number of international organisations and agencies, especially those working in the field of development, have been monitoring enabling environments for civil society over some time, making such questions easier to explore. The two agencies most consistently involved in tracking the changes in overall environment for NGOs/CSOs activities all over the world are the well-known and already mentioned CIVICUS, World Alliance for Civic Participation and the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL). The following section will briefly discuss the data on the external conditions for NGOs/CSOs collected by these organisations.

The Enabling Environment Indicator by CIVICUS

The Enabling Environment Indicator (EEI) is another initiative of CIVICUS. Unlike the Civil Society Index, the EEI focuses on the political and policy context within which NGOs/CSOs operate. As CIVICUS aims to measure the conditions for NGOs/CSO activities holistically, the EEI assesses the environment along three main dimensions – *socio-economic, socio-cultural and governance* – breaking them down into 17 sub-dimensions which are in turn measured through 53 indicators. Table 8 summarises the 17 sub-dimensions captured by the EEI.

Socio-economic dimension	Socio-cultural dimension	Governance dimension
Education	Propensity to participate	Civil society infrastructure
Communications	Giving and volunteering	Policy dialogue
Equality	Trust	Corruption
Gender equality	Tolerance	Political Rights and Freedoms
		Associational Rights
		Rule of law
		Personal Rights
		NGO legal context
		Media freedoms

Table 8. EEI sub-dimensions

Source: CIVICUS 2013 Enabling Environment Index, available at: http://civicus.org/eei/

Country	Socio-economic	Socio-cultural	Governance	EEI
Austria	0,72	0,50	0,91	0,76
Belgium	0,73	0,49	0,88	0,75
Bulgaria	0,62	0,49	0,66	0,61
Croatia	0,66	0,40	0,66	0,60
Cyprus	0,68	0,52	0,83	0,71
Czech Rep	0,74	0,49	0,76	0,69
Denmark	0,77	0,56	0,96	0,81
Estonia	0,73	0,53	0,83	0,73
Finland	0,78	0,50	0,92	0,78
France	0,76	0,47	0,82	0,72
Germany	0,79	0,49	0,75	0,70
Hungary	0,68	0,54	0,77	0,69
Ireland	0,72	0,56	0,89	0,76
Italy	0,68	0,43	0,70	0,63
Latvia	0,70	0,50	0,71	0,65
Lithuania	0,69	0,47	0,72	0,65
Luxembourg	0,72	0,50	0,91	0,76
Malta	0,69	0,53	0,78	0,70
Netherlands	0,82	0,56	0,90	0,79
Poland	0,67	0,51	0,77	0,68
Portugal	0,61	0,51	0,80	0,68
Romania	0,62	0,54	0,60	0,59
Russia	0,61	0,52	0,34	0,45
Slovakia	0,69	0,51	0,71	0,65
Slovenia	0,69	0,49	0,78	0,69
Spain	0,72	0,49	0,81	0,70
Sweden	0,82	0,51	0,92	0,79
United Kingdom	0,73	0,54	0,86	0,75

Table 9. EEI for the EU and Russia, measurement of 2013

Source: CIVICUS 2013 Enabling Environment Index, available at: http://civicus.org/eei/

The previous section has already discussed how the EU member states and Russia score in existing measurements for civic engagement. Thus, the major emphasis here is placed on the governance dimension that also takes into consideration the legal conditions.

The first, and so far the only, measurements of EEI were taken in 2013. Table 9 summarises the scores for the EU member states and Russia for all three dimensions – the final EEI score. The table reveals one main larger pattern: the EU member states, perhaps as expected, score very highly on the governance dimension. This observation, in addition to the discussion about enabling legal conditions, confirms that the legal environment for NGO/CSO operations in the EU member states is stable and encouraging NGOs/CSOs to thrive.

Russia scores extremely highly on the governance dimension with the overall EEI also the lowest – 0.45.[10] The table also reveals that the governance dimension is the only one in which Russia visibly underperforms. This is perhaps not surprising given the recent developments in the legal conditions for NGOs/CSOs. Namely, as carefully summarised by the ICNL, these include a range of amendments and clarifications to a large number of federal laws, including the law on non-commercial organisations, on information and informational technologies, on terrorism and several pending legislative initiatives.

At the same time, the CIVICUS report on the results of 2013 measurement reveals another interesting detail, namely a misbalance between the readiness and willingness of Europeans to participate, their reception of NGOs/CSOs, including trust in these institutions, and the governance (legal) conditions. The table clearly illustrates that all the countries, including Russia, score surprisingly low on the second dimension (socio-cultural environment).

It is worth noting that Russia, in this sense, performs no worse than any average EU member state, even contradicting the observations discussed in the previous section. There are visible differences within the EU and between the EU and Russia in terms of how willing citizens are to take part in civic activities. The EEI notes that when it comes to the civic engagement of EU and Russian citizens, both are pretty much on the same level when it comes to volunteering, donating or trusting NGOs/CSOs.

Measurements by the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law

The above-mentioned ICNL is engaged in more detailed and focused monitoring of the legal conditions for NGOs/CSOs. It does not systematically monitor the legal situation in the EU member states – "the target group" consists mainly of the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Legal developments in some of the European countries (Western Balkans, Turkey, and post-Soviet states) are being monitored by the European Centre for not-for-Profit law (ECNL).

The state of legal conditions is also monitored as a part of general monitoring by such instruments as the NGO/CSO Sustainability Index. Its latest report for 2015, for instance, registers several trends in relation to legal environment. First, while generally all the countries in the cluster "Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia" demonstrate a stable development in terms of legal conditions for NGOs, four countries – Russia, Azerbaijan, Hungary

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10   The numeric scores are located on a scale from 0 to 1.

and Macedonia – show negative trends. The year of 2015 marked an intensification of the so-called direct legal crackdown on NGOs in Russia and Azerbaijan whereas in Hungary and Macedonia (as well as in Croatia and Kosovo) some of the legal measures such as those on management regulations, etc. can obstruct NGO activities indirectly.

However, the ICNL presents a more detailed analysis of changes in the legal conditions for NGOs by regularly publishing reports on the recent trends in regulation of NGOs/CSOs activities. These reports evaluate the situation globally and outline the global trends. The latest analysis, published in 2013, brings to light several main trends: (1) an increase of restrictive measures for obtaining foreign funding for NGOs, (2) increase of the regulatory barriers to freedom of assemblies around the world and (3) increased impediments on NGOs' ability to communicate over the Internet.

As for the first trend, ICNL researchers found that in a number of countries, namely Russia, Middle Asian post-soviet countries, Azerbaijan, Israel, Egypt, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, etc. a number of restrictive measures related to obtaining foreign funding – especially, by using the terminology of those laws, NGOs involved in any form of political activities – have been introduced. The same countries were mentioned in relation to the second trend: restrictions of the freedom of assembly.[11] Finally, the same states, joined by some countries in Africa (Uganda, Tunisia, etc.) and South Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, etc.) have also invested in regulating NGOs' access to the Internet.

One rather pessimistic idea emerging from the ICNL is that, based on preliminary analysis of preparatory legislative work under way in some countries, in the next couple of years these trends will likely develop; more restrictive regulatory measures will be found in more countries. Some scholars and practitioners even alarmingly argue that the world is entering a period of tightening of legal regulations relevant for NGO activities, especially the ones related to (Internet) communication and use of social media (Lewis, 2013; van der Borgh & Terwindt, 2012).

In general, the tendency is towards a "closing space" for NGOs. Importantly, although the tendency is most visible in the countries that can, under certain conditions, be labelled as "authoritative regimes", "well-functioning democracies" are not immune to the same trends. For instance, although none of the EU member states has been found in the groups of countries adopting these restrictive measures, in some of them (Poland, Hungary) these issues emerge occasionally in public debate.

However, most of the legal restrictions for NGOs in the democratic states are indirect and emerge as a result of the larger trend of securitisation and increasing number of security measures, such as anti- or counter-terrorist measures and laws (Wolff & Poppe, 2015). Thus, if in the democratically problematic spaces the states introduce legal measures that explicitly target NGOs/CSOs and restrict their access to funding and cooperation with their foreign counterparts, in developed democracies the biggest threat is increasing securitisation.

Conclusions

The data presented and analysed in this part of the report highlights several important trends for development of NGOs/CSOs in Russia and the EU. First, the indices that measure sustainability of NGO/CSO development confirm quite a well-known pattern of geographical divisions in Europe. The "older" member states demonstrate stability in terms of the strength of NGOs, and the Southern and Eastern European members are explicitly lagging behind or, in some cases such as Poland and Hungary, rolling back slightly.

Given the recent political developments in some of the EU10 countries such as popularity of right-wing governments, one can predict some further deterioration in the conditions for NGOs/CSOs, possibly in official government rhetoric or as concrete measures that limit the space for associational activity.[12] The indices that measure the extent of civic engagement among the EU members largely confirm the same pattern of geographical divisions yet do not illustrate any worrying trends.

The case of Russia is more alarming though. The data on all three dimensions important to understanding the state of civil society – strength of NGOs/CSOs, civic engagement and enabling environment for civil society – shows a clear backsliding in Russia, especially in terms of the legal environment for NGOs/CSOs. The data shows that although Russians can no longer be seen as passive and non-engaging citizens and that although the Russian civil society is quite strong as a service deliverer, the major threat to civil society comes from open harassment by the state through its legal restrictions. This includes labelling NGOs as "Foreign Agents" and obstructing the access to external funding.

Accordingly, not only can Russia be contrasted with the EU member states, but it can also be seen as a case of the larger global trend, which is the closing space for civil society. There is an ongoing debate between academics and practitioners about potential triggers of this trend. They see the domestic political instability and domestic vulnerability of hybrid political regimes as the major reason.

The case of Russia might be illuminating for the situation with NGOs/CSOs in some of the EU member states where domestic politics is increasingly becoming unstable and turbulence might evolve. The circle of countries that can potentially experience the Russian scenario, in more or, hopefully, less dramatic colours, is not limited to the Central and Eastern European states with explicit backsliding of democracy. It can also include countries where the right-wing governments take the power or even spaces shaken by such events as Brexit, the Eurozone and the refugee crisis.

11   The recent studies show that the overall number of the countries that introduced the restrictive measures, especially on foreign funding, is 57 (Christensen & Weinstein, 2013; van der Borgh & Terwindt, 2012; Wolff & Poppe, 2015)

12   Recent "searches" in the offices of the Hungarian NGOs/CSOs and the Hungarian government's attempts to restrict their access to the external funding (the EU Structural Funds and the Norwegian Funds) are, perhaps, the most alarming signs of the worsening of the conditions for NGOs/CSOs in this part of Europe. For a review of the situation in Hungary see the Chapter in this Report and here: http://politicalcritique.org/cee/hungary/2016/kretakor-ngo-in-hungary/; http://hungarianspectrum.org/2015/05/30/the-war-between-the-hungarian-government-and-the-ngos-continues/

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Germany

Germany: Relative Well-Being

By Ulla Pape

Among the investigated country case studies, Germany shows an example of a developed democracy and the most successful social market economy, where civil society plays a very important role in the welfare model.

Civil society organisations have a long tradition in Germany, particularly in the fields of welfare, education, sports and culture. Many organisations can trace their history back to the 19th century. Others were founded in the first decades after World War II. Among the organisations interviewed for this study, a clear majority (nearly 70%) have existed for more than 20 years.

A characteristic of the German welfare system is the close cooperation with social sector organisations, the so-called Verbände (Zimmer 2010). This is described as a "corporate welfare system", in which state institutions work in partnerships with civil society. Social services are provided by a network of umbrella organisations that have local branches and implementing partners. Social umbrella organisations, e.g. Caritas, AWO and Kolpingwerk, play an important role in the provision of social services (ibid.). They also do significant advocacy work for their members and beneficiaries. These partnerships mean that many CSOs benefit from stable cooperation and funding agreements with state institutions, such as ministries and specialised government agencies.

German civil society in numbers

There are different kinds of civil society organisations, typically categorised as associations (Vereine), umbrella organisations (Verbände) and foundations (Stiftungen) (Zimmer et al. 2016).

The largest number of CSOs in Germany are associations. There are almost 600,000 associations registered, the majority of which are small and active on the local level (Ibid.). The density of associations is spread equally over the different federate states (Länder) (Zimmer et al. 2016).

Next to associations, foundations have become very popular in Germany over the past years. Legal reforms gave the rise to a "foundation boom" between 2002 and 2007. According to the Association of German Foundations, there are currently around 21,000 private foundations operating in Germany (Ibid.). Most likely, the total number is even higher, as public registration offices are not obliged to make their data files accessible (Ibid.).

Tax-exempt cooperatives are another option and have regained popularity in Germany after the EU lightened the requirements to start a cooperative. The overall number of cooperatives in Germany, however, is only around 900 (Zimmer et al. 2013: 27; Zimmer et al. 2016). Tax-exempt co-operatives are increasingly to be found in the areas of renewable energy and shared housing for senior citizens (Ibid.).

Legal framework and financing

Typically, civil society organisations in Germany rely on a mix of funding resources. However, there is a traditional division between organisations. Some are active in the welfare domain (social services and health care), which are financed primarily through social and health insurance allowances and are thus incorporated in the German welfare state system (Zimmer/Priller 2007: 81). While CSOs in other policy fields (such as sports or arts and culture) rely on membership fees and private donations.

The general legal framework for CSOs has been favourable and stable. The most common organisational and legal forms that are linked to civil society in Germany are associations (Verein), cooperatives (Genossenschaften) and private law foundations (Stiftung des Privatrechts). These organisational and legal forms date back to the time of the German Empire (Zimmer et al. 2016).

The different organisational forms follow different rationales. Associations are established on the concept of reciprocity, whereby activities are organised for members by members. Cooperatives are meant to minimise economic risks to their members and allow them to access markets of goods and services or financial products. Foundations are organisations that are not member-based and non-commercial (Ibid.). They relate to civil society, as they might provide finances for charitable causes.

Recently a new legal form, private limited company (gemeinnützige Unternehmergesellschaft), was introduced in Germany in order to facilitate start-ups of social enterprises. The rationale for introducing a new legal form is that social enterprises have a charitable purpose, but, in contrast to associations, need to operate in the market. This new legal form has not yet gained significant importance (Ibid.).

Data

In Germany 75 responses were collected on the online survey. Respondents came from different policy fields: more than one third were active in the field of youth and education (37%). This can be attributed to many youth organisations being active in international youth exchange programmes, which also include the collaboration with partner organisations in Eastern Europe and Russia. These organisations are more likely to respond to a call that focuses on civil society relations between the EU and Russia. Human rights organisations comprise another 17%, history and culture field 12%, environmental protection and social policy are mentioned by 4% correspondingly. About 27% answered this question as "another field".

As for the age of the organisation, more than two thirds of the respondents are said to be engaged with an organisation that is older than 20 years (69%) and a lot are between 10 and 20 years (19%). Only one respondent was a representative of a newly founded CSO; 10% say their organisations are between 1 and 10 years old. This overview does not reflect German civil society but shows that many CSOs in Germany are organisations with a relatively long history.

More than one third of the respondents are active in medium-size organisations with 10 to 50 active members and volunteers (37.7%) and with a number of 50-100 people (14%). One quarter of the respondents (about 30%) is active for large organisations with more than 100 active people; 20% speak about small organisations with less than 10 people.

More than half of the organisations are active at the national (56.9%) level and international (66.7%) levels, 29% work on the level of one state (Land), 35% on the regional and 28% on the local levels, from which 8% work also in other cities/towns and 6% only in the capital city.

In general, this sample does not represent the civil society sector in Germany, but it shows quite diverse civil society organisations that wanted to contribute to the study.

Challenges for CSOs in Germany

The challenges of CSOs are presented here after an analysis of the respondents' answers of the online survey. The first question was about general evaluation of the current situation.

From the responses, we can conclude that more than 60% of the respondents assess the situation of their organisation as stable or improving. Only 22% of the respondents observe a deterioration of their organisation's overall situation over the past year. Some 15% of the respondents find it difficult to answer the question.

The answers to Question 2 show a similar picture to Question 1. A majority of respondents describes the context conditions of their organisation as "positive". Particularly state funding and support and the legal situation are assessed in a positive way. The respondents are the least positive about private donations. With regard to public opinion and voluntary participation a majority of respondents is satisfied with the conditions.

Figure 13

How has the situation of your organisation changed over the past three years (2013-2016)? (only one answer possible)

Difficult to say	38
Worse	8
Stayed the same	22
Better	8

0   20   40

Figure 14

How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to legal framework, private donations, public opinion, state support, volunteering and media coverage?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Private donations	37	35	28
State support	18	36	46
Legal framing	15	21	64
Media coverage	26	40	33
Public opinion	15	23	62
Volunteering	13	24	63

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Negative   ■ Neutral   □ Positive

Media reporting forms an interesting issue. Most respondents assess the situation as "neutral" or "positive". However, there is also a significant number of respondents who assess media reporting to be "negative" or even "very negative". This indicates that media reporting forms a concern to those groups and organisations in Germany that are working on topical issues, including political relations with Russia and Eastern Europe, the response to the refugee crisis in Europe and human rights issues.

Overall, most CSO representatives assess the conditions as favourable. There are some concerns with the levels of private donations and media reporting. CSOs are in general satisfied with the legal situation and with state-supported programmes. They also describe public opinion as positive towards civil society. Voluntary participation is also described as predominantly positive.

Table 10

What kind of major challenges have civil society organisations faced in your country over the last year (open question)?	Summary of open answers – Challenges to CSOs in Germany	
This question was answered by 46 respondents.	Financial challenges	Decrease in funding, short-term project financing, decrease in private donations, problems with long-term financing, funding for employees, co-funding makes the financing of projects difficult, lack of financing for ongoing work and overhead, problems with structural funding, "project hopping"
	Problems in the cooperation with Russia	War in Ukraine, humanitarian situation, vulnerable population, law on Foreign Agents in Russia, authoritarian rule in Russia, repression of NGOs in Russia, cooperation with Russian NGOs become more difficult
	Organisational challenges	Young people have less time for voluntary work, recruitment of volunteers, employees are overburdened, risk of burn-out, difficulties to find voluntary board members, competition among NGOs
	Political problems	Integration, refugee crisis, radicalisation in society, migration
	Legal challenges	Strict regulations for associations
	Media	Difficulties in getting media attention, negative media reporting; Communication challenges: NGOs need to present themselves in social media
	Societal challenges	Racism, xenophobia

From the open answers to the third question we can conclude that CSO representative perceive financial challenges to be the most critical to civil society development in Germany. Many respondents describe a decrease in structural funding and a growing dependence on project financing as a concern. In the interviews, CSO representatives described how these shifts in funding arrangements make organisational development more challenging. One respondent explained:

> "The main challenge [for our organisation] is financial stability [...]. As a relatively small organisation, it is difficult for us to meet the administrative requirements for participating in grant programmes, set by the Ministry of Education, by the European Union and/or by private foundations." (Interview G2)

Because of the decrease in structural funding, CSOs find it more difficult to plan for the future and develop their programmes in a sustainable way. CSOs report that it is especially difficult to raise money for long-term programmes, recurrent activities and personnel or overhead costs. Some organisations describe their work as "chronically underfunded" (answer to an open question).

Internal challenges such as high workload form a second concern for CSOs in Germany. Due to increasing challenges to the organisations, the performance requirements for people employed in CSOs have grown. Some organisations report problems with workload and time pressure. Many CSOs report difficulties in financing employees for the organisation of voluntary work. Other organisations report that both paid staff members and volunteers deal increasingly with problems such as time pressure or burn-out.

With regard to public opinion, some organisations describe the situation today as more challenging than in the past. New channels of communication, e.g. social media, also mean that CSOs have to strengthen their communication skills, e.g. in presenting themselves to their audience and in communicating their positions.

For some organisations, these new requirements form a concern, as time and personnel resources are limited. One respondent explained:

> "Social media is playing a more important role than in the past. We are now developing our media communication. We are a small organisation and are fully dependent on private donations. In response to the growing competition [in the non-profit sector], we try to strengthen our profile." (Interview G2)

Overall, many organisations reported in the online survey that communicating the organisation's concerns and positions in an effective way has become a key asset for successful CSOs.

Political and societal changes constitute a third area of challenges for civil society organisations in Germany. Many organisations mentioned migration and in particular the refugee crisis in 2015-16 as a new challenge for civil society:

> "The refugee crisis is a challenge that affects us all. We need a European solution to face this challenge." (Interview G1)

Some organisations reported that the refugee crisis overshadowed other activities and concerns of CSOs in Germany.

However, many organisations see migration as a new chance for civil society in Germany. Many CSOs explain that civil society can play an important role in the integration of new citizens, as one CSO representative explained in the interview:

"In our societal work, raising awareness for intercultural exchange and understanding is very important. We need to emphasise the positive sides and the strengths of integration and not the problems. We want to look on the potential. If we communicate integration well, we can change a lot and we can contribute a lot." (Interview G4)

Next to migration CSO representatives mentioned other societal development that present a challenge for civil society, as for instance political radicalisation, growing xenophobia and the rise of populist parties in Germany. One respondent explained:

"With regard to civil society, we can observe a renationalisation of the civil society in Europe. We can also see the impact of right-wing populism. In Germany, the AfD [the right-wing party Alternative for Germany] has managed to occupy the issue of direct democracy; this is a threat to our democracy and to civil society." (Interview G1)

CSOs that collaborate with partners in Eastern Europe are in a particular situation. Many of these organisations referred to the tensions between Europe and Russia, the repressions against civil society in Russia and the war in Ukraine as a growing concern. Due to these political tensions, cooperation with partner organisations in Russia and other countries in Eastern Europe has become more challenging for German CSOs, as they feel that they need to protect their partner organisations in Eastern Europe. One interviewee explained the shifts in the political context:

"The situation [in Eastern Europe] has changed. CSOs need to react to the war in Ukraine. It is important [for us] to think about a responsible way in dealing with information from Russia and Ukraine." (Interview G3)

Question 4 asked about the specific challenges German CSOs have been facing over the past year. The answers to this question partly overlapped the responses from Question 3. This shows that most respondents do not see a large difference between the situation of their organisation and civil society development in general.

As result of both the online survey and the interviews, diverse challenges that civil society organisations are facing in Germany were mentioned by CSOs in Germany. They range from overall societal changes to specific problems for individual organisations.

Table 11

What kind of challenges has your organisation faced over the last year (open question)? This question was answered by 41 respondents.	Summary – Challenges to the specific organisation	
	Financial challenges	Short-term project financing, decrease in funding and private donations, financial sustainability is under threat, financing
	Organisational challenges	Bureaucratic requirements increased, finding qualified staff members
	Cooperation	Difficulties in registering funding through Belarussian partner organisations
	Political challenges	War in Ukraine, cooperation with Russian NGOs become difficult, more support from official decision-makers is needed for voluntary work, political tensions in Eastern Europe, Putin's policies, refugee crisis, difficulty to finance programmes with Russian partners, difficult in keeping contact with Russian partners
	Societal challenges	New societal developments are a challenge to the organisation, readiness to work in an intercultural society
	Voluntary engagement	Difficulties in activating young people
	Information	Difficulty in reporting on Russia in Germany
	Media	Strong competition regarding media reporting and attention among NGOs

Financial challenges

In the interviews, many CSO representatives reported financial difficulties. Financing was also the topic that was most often mentioned in the online survey. Fundraising is a concern for many CSOs in Germany. Many organisations depend on short-term project funding. With this type of funding, organisations find it difficult to cover expenses for personnel and to invest in organisational development. Often, project funding covers a period of only six months or one year. Organisations can thus not plan ahead, but have to work "from project to project". This trend towards short-term funding makes organisational development more challenging. In some cases, CSOs find it difficult to sustain their operations.

In addition, CSOs mentioned that fundraising is very demanding in terms of time, costs and personnel. In order to win a grant, CSOs have to invest a lot of energy, while at the same time having no security that their investment will pay out for the organisation. Many CSOs therefore have to struggle to guarantee a sustainable development of their organisations. In the online survey, a majority of CSOs mentioned that they have intensified their fundraising activities in recent years in order to sustain the financial stability of their organisations.

Organisational challenges

Many CSOs face difficulties with administrative requirements and increasing bureaucratic pressure. Some organisations mention difficulties in finding qualified staff members. Furthermore, for many organisations it is difficult to recruit volunteers.

Many CSO representatives also mentioned that the work of CSOs is not sufficiently valued, as one interviewee emphasised:

> "A third challenge is the lack of support for civil society development of civil. This is also a national challenge [in Germany]." (Interview G1)

Many organisations therefore demand a greater appreciation of CSOs and more support for voluntary work.

Societal challenges

Many CSOs refer to macro societal developments that have an impact on civil society. Some interviewees mentioned demographic change and immigration as major challenges for CSOs in Germany. Whereas in the past, German society was rather homogenous, there are many different cultures today. This has an impact on civil society. Organisations need to adjust to new intercultural conditions, as one representative of a national youth organisation illustrated:

> "As a youth organisation, we need to respond to the changes in society, e.g. demographic changes and changes in the population structure. In some parts of Germany, one third of the younger population has a so-called migration background. We need to consider this new diversity [in our work]." (Interview G4)

Some organisations reported that they strive to open themselves to "new citizens". These organisations are of the opinion that civil society can play an important role in integration.

Political challenges

Many respondents referred to the refugee crisis as a challenge for CSOs. CSOs that are active in intercultural relations with Eastern Europe mentioned the Ukraine conflict, the political development in Russia and the tightening relations between Russia and Europe as a challenge to their transnational work. CSOs that closely cooperate with Russian or other European partners mentioned the political situation as a major obstacle:

> "We know that not much is changing on the Russian side. In Russia, [our partner] organisations stand on their own. There is no funding structure [for youth exchange] at the national level. The partner organisations are small NGOs that are based in particular cities or regions in Russia. They do not have much capacity." (Interview G2)

The organisation reported that cooperation with Russian partners has become a touchy issue, as organisations in Russia face repression from government agencies. Russian CSOs feel the effect of the "foreign agent law" and other repressive legislation regarding civil society. German CSOs therefore need to be extremely careful in their cooperation with Russian and Ukrainian partner organisation. Some CSOs reported that they have converted their official cooperation with partner organisations to informal cooperation with the aim of protecting their partner organisations in Russia and Ukraine.

Best practices: How CSOs respond to challenges

The online survey and interviews both addressed how CSOs responded to the challenges and their "best practices". Question 5 in the survey was particularly concerned with this aspect.

Table 12

Has your organisation found some interesting solutions / best practices for the given challenges? Briefly describe. (By "best practices" we mean innovative solutions, practices, initiatives, which allow civil society organisations to face and react to challenges) (open question) This question was answered by 49 respondents.	Summary – Best practices	
	Human rights NGOs	Forming a bridge between migrants and state institutions by using digital communication means, focusing on young people and digital communication, more attention for motivated members, broad focus of the NGOs (using all different means of non-profit work)
	Environmental NGOs	Exchange and agreements with other NGOs, social entrepreneurship as an opportunity for organisational development
	Youth organisations	Focus on marketing strategies, cooperation with universities, organisation of information meeting at universities, recruitment of volunteers, looking for new forms of participation, accompanying programmes by researchers, intercultural dialogue, opening of the organisation towards 'new citizens', cooperation with other NGOs and with social entrepreneurs
	Historical and cultural NGOs	Continuation of cooperation under different name, if partner organisation in Russia face legal problems, sponsorship for partner organisations, investing more money in public relations and communications
	NGOs in other fields:	So-called Ehrenamtmesse (fair on voluntary work) to promote voluntary work, support projects for refugees, focus on online communication, focus on financial planning and control with the aim to meet bureaucratic requirements, participation of volunteers in project planning and fundraising, public discourse on voluntary engagement, focus on local projects

Depending on the sphere of activity, the presented examples of best practices vary across respondents. Interestingly, many CSO representatives describe new forms of cooperation among organisations as a viable best practice. Other CSO representatives mentioned innovative practices, e.g. information programmes on volunteering or integration projects as best practices of their organisation.

Communication forms a specific field of organisational innovation. Many CSO representatives mentioned that they have developed new marketing, social media, and public relations strategies to improve their communication and to strengthen public support for the organisations.

CSOs that cooperate with Russian partners reported about strategies to make cooperation with the partners more informal and less visible in order to protect and not harm the Russian partner organisations.

At the end of the questionnaire, the question was asked whether the respondents would like to share their best practices with other civil society organisations in other countries through an interview. This question was answered by 49 respondents; 19 respondents answered with yes (38.8 %), 30 respondents answered with no (61.2%). Respondents who had answered with yes were asked to provide their contact details. They were contacted, and as result, 4 interviews were conducted.

The best practices suggested by the respondents fall into five different groups: (1) programme development, (2) organisational development, (3) communication and networking, (4) strengthening and promoting voluntary work, and (5) using the potential of civil society to respond to the new challenges of migration and integration in Germany.

First, many organisations described new programme activities that are developed to ensure the quality of their programmes and raise the attractiveness of the organisation for its members, volunteers and external stakeholders. Examples are new training programmes for volunteers.

A second category of best practices includes the adoption of innovative ways for organisational development, e.g. project management, monitoring and controlling tools. With these measures, CSOs strive to raise their professional level. Many respondents explained that they needed to develop new project management techniques in order to be competitive and well equipped for grant competition requirements.

The third group of best practices concerns communication and networking. Many organisations described new communication tools to improve cooperation with other civil society actors. CSOs described these efforts as an important step in strengthening civil society development in Germany.

Fourth, CSOs have developed best practices to develop and support voluntary work. These activities include the co-called Ehrenamtmesse (a fair on voluntary activities) and the establishment of voluntary support centres. With these activities, CSOs want to promote voluntary engagement in Germany.

The fifth and last group of best practices includes all efforts that are aimed at responding to the challenges of migration and integration. With the refugee crisis in 2015-16, the role of CSOs in dealing with integration has become more prominent. Many organisations have become active in providing assistance to incoming migrants and in developing programmes for societal integration.

As result of both interviews and the online survey, the following examples for best practices developed by CSOs in Germany can be presented.

Inclusion and integration projects at the German Youth Fire Service

The German Youth Fire Service (Deutsche Jugendfeuerwehr) was founded in Berlin in 1964 as the youth organisation of the German Fire Service Federation (Deutscher Feuerwehrverband – DFV). The German Youth Fire Service is a non-profit youth organisation with a public benefit status. It has 245,000 members aged between 10 and 18 years who are organised in 18,100 youth fire brigades throughout Germany. The organisation is present in almost every community, town and country in both East and West Germany.

In many local communities, the German Youth Fire Service plays an important role in education. Young people can join a local fire brigade and train as voluntary fighters. In the course of this voluntary training, they acquire social and technical skills that prepare them for professional training and working life. An important element of the German Youth Fire Service is the culture of solidarity and mutual support. Members help and support each other beyond their voluntary work. In many communities, the fire services play an important role in community life.

Because of its role as a community organisation, the German Youth Fire Service has acknowledged its part in strengthening societal integration. The organisation has adopted several programmes that emphasise cultural diversity within the youth fire brigades. One campaign of the organisation is called "Our world is colourful." With these activities, the organisation aims to attract new members from different cultural backgrounds and foster societal integration, as representative of the organisation explained in the interview:

> "Young people with a migration background find a new home in the voluntary fire service [Jugendfeuerwehr]. They are enthusiastic about it. We also say: 'The fire service is a family.' We often see that members of the fire brigade develop private contacts with each other. The fire service has always played a role in integration. This is why we can be strong in integration as well. We help young people to develop themselves. Sometimes older members of the fire brigade help the teenagers to find an apprenticeship position." (Interview G4)

In addition, the German Youth Fire Service emphasises the role of its organisation in the German democratic system. It aims to create a "welcome culture" to new members of society. These intentions do not remain words on paper but are realised in many local projects. Local branches, for example, have debated how they can adjust the traditional German barbecue evening for members with different cultural eating habits (Interview G4).

By looking for practical solutions, the German Youth Fire Service manages to create more diversity in the organisation:

> "Intercultural understanding and opening is important for the youth fire brigade. Integration must be a process in two directions. Not only do the newcomers need to learn and adapt. We [= the "accepting" culture] also need to adapt. The negotiation process [between different cultures] is important." (Interview G4)

According to a representative of the German Youth Fire Service, "the strength of the organisation is its pragmatism" (Interview G4). This means that the organisation strives to find practical solutions when facing difficulties in its integration work. The organisation successfully adapts to the challenges of a changing society and thereby plays an important role in integration.

Information blog on Ukraine and Russia by the Society for Threatened Peoples

Another "best practice" was provided by the Society for Threatened Peoples (Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker), based in Göttingen and Berlin. The Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) is an international human rights organisation that advocates for threatened ethnic and religious minorities, nationalities and indigenous communities.

As a response to the violent conflict in Ukraine, the STP established a news blog "Ukraine/Russia: Chronicle of Current Affairs"[13]. With this new information service, the organisation aims to provide impartial information on the human rights situation in the areas of Eastern Ukraine, affected by the violent conflict. The motivation behind this project is the need to provide reliable information on the conflict to German decision-makers as well as to the general public, as a representative of the organisation explained:

> "We think that there is a lack of understanding at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when it comes to the situation in Ukraine and Russia. Therefore, we decided to provide independent information from the crisis region." (Interview G3)

With this new information initiative, The Society for Threatened Peoples is striving to strengthen its position as information provider (Interview G3). The organisation thereby wants to create more support for its concerns. In addition, the organisation has intensified its cooperation with the public media:

> "We intensified our work on Ukraine. We also cooperate with journalists and communicate contacts." (Interview G3)

The news blog can be considered as "best practice", as it demonstrates a new initiative that broadens the profile of an organisation and responds to the need for more reliable and impartial information on the conflict and the human rights situation in Ukraine.

Support for refugees / Quarteera, Berlin

The Berlin-based LGBT organisation Quarteera organises support activities for migrants who fled their home country because of repression with regard to their sexual orientation and activities in LGBT organisations. The organisation works mostly with Russian-speaking LGTB migrants, many of whom have left their home countries because of homophobia. With practical support, Quarteera seeks to assist in the communication with migrants and asylum seekers on the one hand and German state institutions on the other. This effort to build bridges between state institutions in Germany and new citizens is described in the following way:

> "The organisation was successful in mediating between migrants and German authorities. This has been possible because the organisation has been able to create trust on both sides" (answer to an open question).

The organisation reports on its activities in a blog: http://www.quarteera.de/blog/Aktiv-fuer-Demokratie-und-Toleranz.

Networking among civil society organisations

In the online survey, many respondents mentioned networking and information exchange among CSOs in Germany and Europe as a "best practice". The idea behind networking is that CSOs can help each other by exchanging valuable information and support. In some cases, umbrella organisations have developed support services that are made available to other CSOs:

> "One good example [for best practices] is the voluntary centres that have been established by Caritas (an international welfare organisation): With these centres, one organisation has created an infrastructure that can be used by civil society organisations in general. Caritas has created a structure for all." (Interview G1)

The voluntary Caritas centres help CSOs to make better use of voluntary work. These centres can be used not only by the local branches of Caritas but also by other CSOs. Caritas thus helped to create a service for civil society development in general, which therefore deserves mentioning as a "best practice".

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13   Ukraine/Russland: Chronik der Ereignisse, available at: https://gfbvberlin.wordpress.com/ukraine-russland-chronik/

**Peaceful dialogue between Russian and
Ukrainian civil society organisations**

A peaceful dialogue between Russian and Ukrainian civil society organisations is needed to overcome the growing tensions and lack of understanding between the two societies (Interview G3). According to the Society for Threatened Peoples, civil society plays an important role in informing the public about the conflict and in creating support for peace initiatives:

> "In Germany, CSOs have taken up the position of informing about current developments." (Interview G3)

CSOs in Germany strive to inform about the conflict and be in contact with organisations from both sides. This peaceful dialogue is not a "best practice" at this point but rather an idea that needs to be realised in the future (Interview G3).

Conclusions

From the online survey conducted among German CSOs and the interviews, it can be concluded that many representatives of German civil society evaluate the situation of their organisations as relatively positive and stable. Unlike their counterparts in Russia, German CSOs do not report regulatory restrictions or repressions from the authorities. The legal environment for civil society was described as positive or neutral by the vast majority of respondents. Whenever German CSOs mentioned problems or difficulties, these concerned more general trends in society, e.g. the impact of the refugee crisis or growth of populist movements in Germany and other countries of Europe.

Concerning funding and institutional set-up, most German CSOs were relatively satisfied with the situation in Germany. This, however, does not mean that civil society does not encounter any problems in Germany. Many organisations referred to a shift from structural funding to short-term project funding. These changes in the funding mechanisms have a negative impact on the financial stability of organisations. CSOs have to make more efforts to finance their programme and sustain the development of their organisations. Moreover, many organisations noticed a growing competition on funding and media awareness among CSOs. Organisations have to invest a lot to gain support for their cause. Furthermore, many CSOs reported about time pressures which have a negative impact on the working conditions for employees and volunteers.

Many organisations that participated in the survey and the interviews are active in the area of cultural and/or educational exchange with Eastern Europe and Russia. These organisations report that the conflict in Ukraine and the increasing tensions between Russia and the EU have a negative impact on the transnational activities of the organisations. For many CSOs it has become complicated to collaborate with partner organisations in Russia and Ukraine, as they need to protect their partner organisations from potential allegations. At the same time, they mentioned the possible role of civil society in creating bridges between societies in conflict.

Many CSOs also voiced their ideas on how the situation for civil society in Germany could be improved. In general, CSOs would like to see a greater appreciation for the role of civil society from the side of decision-makers:

> "It is important that voluntary work is appreciated and valued [in Germany]. The idea of voluntary work should be supported by politicians." (Interview G1)

Furthermore, many CSOs explained that the infrastructure for strengthening voluntary work should be strengthened and new mechanisms for sustainable funding created. When supporting the capacities of CSOs, civil society can play a vital role in responding to new social challenges and providing a stable basis for societal understanding, which is all the more important today when we are confronted with many new developments in German society.

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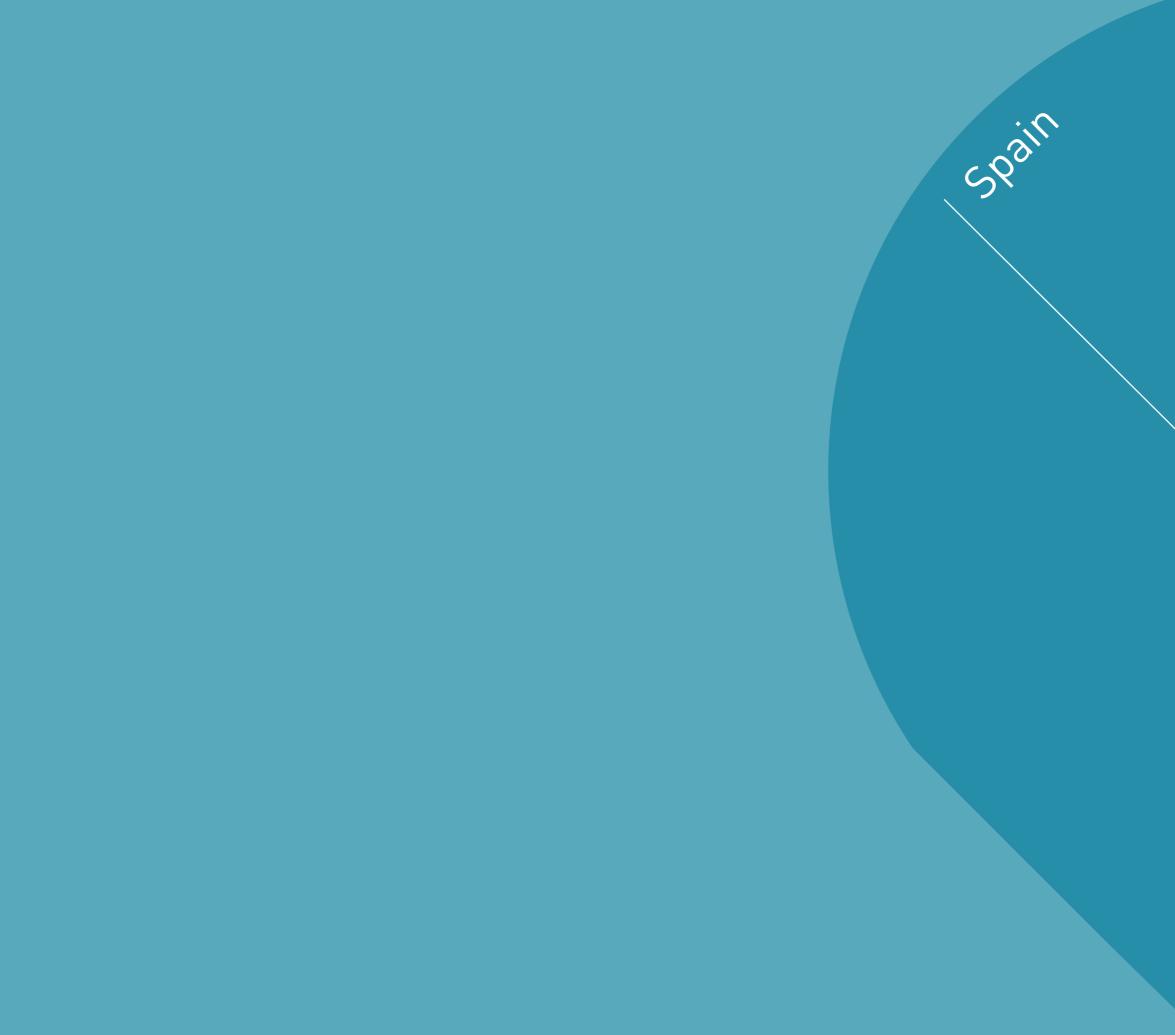
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List of Interviews

Interview G1: national network for the development of civil society and civic engagement
Interview G2: national branch of international NGO working on voluntary services
Interview G3: national human rights NGO
Interview G4: national youth organisation

Spain

Spain: Consequences of Economic Crisis

By Pau Vidal, Montse Fernández,
Polina Baigarova and Blanca Cegarra

Among the presented cases, the Spanish case shows an example of a Southern EU member state that has experienced serious economic crisis during recent years. Therefore, with this case it is possible to see how civil society and CSOs are influenced by this situation. Mainly, the growth of the third sector has stopped suddenly with the arrival of the economic crisis in 2008[14].

Spanish civil society in numbers

To understand civil society development in Spain it is necessary to take into account that it grew and was structured after the Franco dictatorship, as for approximately 40 years (1939-75) the right of association was denied. Therefore, civil society developed in secrecy. After 1978, when the Spanish Constitution granted the right to association, the sector grew rapidly.

According to the CIS Barometer of 2016[15], NGOs generate more confidence among Spanish society. Thus, they are placed above the Spanish Parliament, the judiciary, political parties, banks and the media. However, a CSO manager states:

> "This [high confidence level in organisations] has to keep improving (...) because people understand that the civil sector adds value, and this will encourage more citizens to mobilise." (Interview S4)

There are no official figures on the total number of organisations in Spain, but the Third Sector Observatory estimates that it is located in a range of between 80,000 and 100,000 organisations throughout Spain. Of these, approximately 25% are located in Catalonia.

There are different kinds of civil society organisations: associations, foundations and non-profit cooperatives. These are the main legal forms, but there are also informal social initiatives such as social movements or informal organisations (without legal registration) and specific kinds of religious organisation.

The organisations are in different fields although the social policy field is the most popular. However, many organisations work in other areas: culture, environment, sport, etc. According to results of Panoramic 2015, among different areas of CSO activities, social policy is the main one with 37% of total. "History and culture" and "Sports and hobby" clubs are the other main fields, with 24% and 14% respectively. The human rights field includes international cooperation organisations, which dedicate part of their activities to defend human rights, including civil rights, such as LGBT.

14 See: Vidal, Pau. 2013. Cambio de Época en el tercer sector. Revista Española del Tercer Sector, Nº 23, página 63.
15 It is a study by the Center for Sociological Research that provides indicators on political and economic confidence, ideological position and estimated voting, among others.

Figure 15.
Main field of work

Social policy	37%
History and culture	24%
Sport and hobby clubs	14%
Human rights	9%
Youth and education	9%
Environment	4%
Other	3%

Source: Panoràmic 2015

As for the regional distribution, it is important to highlight that most interview partners stated that the civil society culture is more strongly developed in Catalonia, Madrid and the Basque Country than in the rest of Spain. Various reasons explain these differences: history, geography, culture, mentality, politics, etc. Different levels of social and economic development and a more democratic culture imply different realities of civil society in Spain. In the case of Madrid, the "capital effect" could also explain the stronger development.

> "The Spanish areas where there is more density of organisations [talking about foundations] are these areas where the economic development is higher (...) and there is a higher level of democratic culture." (Interview S4)

Legal framework and financing

There are state laws for both associations and foundations in Spain but at the same time, the different regions of Spain have the ability to regulate its territory. In this sense, there are legal differences between regions. There are also specific regulations for religious organisations.

Spanish organisations have three different ways of financing:

Public financing: derives from the public administration in different ways such as contracts, arrangements, subsidies, etc. In the case of social organisations, they are more dependent on this kind of financing because they manage some social services, which are typically the responsibility of the public administration.

Private financing: comes from individuals, companies, foundations, etc. There are different forms of private financing: contracts, grants, conventions, sponsorships, etc.

Personal financing: comes from the fees for their own services, the sale of products, user fees and/or associates, income from capital assets or directly as donations from people who are involved in the organisation's governing structures.

Traditionally, the optimal situation has been the equilibrium between all three sources because it promotes the economic sustainability of the organisations. However, nowadays the financial dependency on the public administration is a reality in Spain, and this is a problem for the organisations, especially since the economic crisis. The results provided

Data

The methodology of the Spanish case is distinguished from the other cases because it is based on the data collected in the recent study Panoràmic conducted by the Observatori del Tercer Sector in 2015 (Fernández, Vidal 2015), which had the same 7 questions out of 9 asked by the CSF and included more than 2,000 non-profit organisations that had at least one office in Catalonia during 2015. Among these, some are organisations operating in more regions or throughout Spain. We have selected a sample of 147 cases, which operated in two or more Spanish regions or all around the state. To collect information that was not covered in the Panoràmic 2015 and necessary for this study (2 questions out of 9 in the CSF questionnaire), a complementary online survey was sent to the same 147 cases.

Most of the CSOs in the survey are more than 20 years old (54%) and between 10 and 20 years old (24%). Only 13% are between 1 and 5 years old and 8% are between 6 and 10 years old. Only 1% is younger than one year. It is interesting to note here that in Barcelona more than 40% of the associations were created in the past 16 years (Fernández, Vidal 2015).

The scope of the activities in 33% of the cases is on the regional level, while in 25% of cases it is on the national level; 14% of organisations operate on the international level. Activities on the city level represent 18% of the total, 7% in the capital, and 11% in other cities or towns. Organisations working with the rural community were 10% of the total responses.

The scope of people involved in CSOs through membership, volunteering and paid work shows that 44% of the respondents have more than 200 people involved, 13% have between 100 and 200 people and 12% have between 50 and 100. Organisations with less than 50 people involved represents 31% (and 16% have less than 10).

Additionally to the survey, 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents who had indicated their readiness in the survey and were found through NGO networks. The interviewed people come from Spanish non-profit organisations with different kinds of legal forms: associations, foundations, non-profit cooperatives and social movements (without formal organisation). The participants were chosen with selection criteria such as sector of activity (community affairs, social action, gender and migration, transparency, legal assistance, LGBTI and training and research) and geographical location (five organisations work at the local or regional level and the others at the national one).

in the different quantitative studies[16] show that this economic dependence grows in larger organisations and also in second level organisations, especially in social organisations that provide services to socially excluded groups.

There are state and regional laws that regulate the standards of transparency for organisations receiving public money, whether they are for profit or not. But this is recent legislation; the first law was adopted in December 2013.

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16   Participa en el Panoràmic 2016, available at: www.elpanoramic.org/el-panoramic/ http://www.elpanoramic.org/el-panoramic/

Challenges for CSOs in Spain

In response to the question of whether organisations have seen improvement over the past three years, the results of the survey show that 42% observed stability and 33% perceived improvement. The 17% perceived a worsening situation and 8% have no position.

Figure 16. Situation of non-profit organisation in the three last years.

It has improved 33
It has worsened 17
It has remained 42
Do not know 8

Source: complementary online survey

In the survey volunteerism and public opinion are the most positively valued. State aid and the legal framework occupy the third and fourth positions.

Private donations and media coverage, however, are located on the other end of the spectrum. These two aspects are interesting to analyse. On the one hand, the improvement of private donations would allow CSOs independence (and thus improve also political advocacy). And the media are allies needed to highlight the work done by NGOs, which is often invisible. Private donations are evaluated mostly negatively, and media is very polarised (see Figure 24).

Figure 17. Assessment of issues related to NGOs

Financing 73 18 9
Private donations 67 25 8
State support 33 33 34
Legal framing 36 37 27
Media coverage 26 25 49
Public opinion 16 18 66
Volunteering 17 16 67

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

In general, 3 main themes that affect the development of the civil society were identified as result of the study:

→   The economic crisis has caused economic and financial problems to the non-profits organisations;

→   It is necessary to reinforce the relationships between organisations and sectors (state, private profit sector, academia, civil society and community);

→   The non-profit organisations need to increase their social base.

Other important issues are the relationship with/between governmental and public authorities, advocacy, increased social awareness, a lack of transparency culture in non-profit organisations, etc.

All the mentioned challenges are categorised further into five groups: financial, organisational, societal, political and coordinating challenges.

Financial challenges

Economic and financial sustainability is a common problem in Spain. Many organisations report that financial difficulties and fundraising is a concern for CSOs, especially as a result of the crisis. Besides that, some organisations depend on public funding and this is a problem in the current social and economic context. In this sense, it is necessary to diversify their financial revenues and improve both the quantity and the quality of the sources.

"Organisations should improve their financial capacity (...) getting more economic resources by all ways: public, private and own financing." (Interview S1)

In this context, it is difficult to cover the personnel costs and to build professional careers in the CSOs with the current government cutbacks and limited resources. A social CSO representative points out:

"The professionalisation is still necessary (...) we are very social, but we have to pay salaries to employees and therefore we should apply certain rationality in managing." (Interview S8)

On the other hand, the representatives of organisations point out the need to have more autonomy, not only to have more of their own resources, but also to get their own voice and improve their ability to influence the public authorities. A CSO representative states:

"There are many small organisations that have had many problems or have disappeared because of the crisis and those bigger have managed to get over the crisis." (Interview S8)

Basically it happens because of dependency on public resources, which is more noticeable in small organisations.

Organisational challenges

Many CSOs face difficulties with administrative requirements and increasing bureaucratic pressure, especially to get public financing. Another common challenge is to improve internal democracy inside the organisations and relieve people on the councils (which have responsibility to guide the political strategies of organisations). In general, the organisations need to improve their organisational management. The organisations also have to adapt to new technologies and improve their internal and external communication.

Another common challenge is the professionalisation of the third sector and the associated consequences. How to involve "professionals" in the day-to-day decision-making process? How to get the balance of power between "professionals" and "volunteers"?

> "The role of professionals in the day-to-day decision-making process is unclear. We should seek spaces for including these professionals and let them to respond to the functioning of the organisation (...) we should seek a balance of forces for making strategic decisions." (Interview S3)

Societal challenges

Many organisations report lack of acknowledgement from society. A common challenge for many organisations is to become more visible and be more proactive. Indeed, most organisations need to increase their social base.

Some trends have given big public support for some movements, whereas organisations that deal with less popular topics are struggling. For example, the environmental organisations point out a lack of confidence and misinformation about environmental issues and lack of social awareness in this field. One respondent from an environment organisation states:

> "There are sectors, where people think that they are more trusted than others, so they do not mind collaborating with them (...) but for lack of tradition or sensitivity, there is a very big difference between what we have here (in Spain) and what happens in Holland, USA, Germany, United Kingdom, etc." (Interview S9)

The CSO affirms that people collaborate less in Spain because of a cultural problem, which is a lack of awareness.

Political challenges

The organisations also seek more acknowledgement from public administration and a change in how some politicians view the third sector. They demand more recognition of their value. Many organisations expect greater recognition of their work and more acknowledgement for their contribution to public policies (advocacy). On the other hand, many interviewees stated the need to seek synergies between them (organisations and public administration) and promoting a more horizontal relationship.

> "(For newer organisations) one of the main problems is the lack of dialogue with the state because there are not permanent opened channels... to talk about certain problems." (Interview S5)

Another important challenge is the need to create a discourse and to improve the advocacy of the organisations. Advocacy is also a challenge because the organisations are limited due to regulation and existing legal mechanisms. A CSO representative states:

> "There isn't direct democracy... and civil society have fewer tools to make sense of the organisation and to change laws, without direct democracy." (Interview S1)

Usually the second level or umbrella organisations (such as networks) have the responsibility for political influence. However it is important to give voice to the small organisations and to launch a shared discourse.

Coordination challenges

Most of the CSOs talked about the need for more coordination between the organisations and even to merge the smallest ones together in order to be more stable. One of the biggest challenges is structuring the civil society and the collaboration between the different levels. These alliances will enforce the civil society organisations.

> "There is a deficiency of alliances and synergies (...) It is necessary to seek alliances and synergies in order to find social innovations; this implies going out of our comfort zone." (Interview S10)

At the same time, it is important to improve communication between the third sector, social movements and informal initiatives of solidarity to create a shared discourse. As Fantova (2015) points out, in the wake of the recent economic crisis, most traditional third sector organisations have been, and have been seen as, a part of the establishment and have not been able to react with social innovation and social transformation processes. They are being replaced in this role by new social movements that have created new ways of influencing policies and politics.

In the interviews, the CSOs pointed out other challenges that are important for the development of the civil society, such as avoiding commercialisation of social services in favour of the social third sector; overcoming the atomisation of organisations, creation of more alliances and fusion between them:

> "[About the merge of organisations] with the grouped knowledge and background through the fusion it is easier to access to funds." (Interview S6).

Finally, search for places for CSOs, improvement of regulation of public space use:

> "(The organisations) claim to recover the use of public space ... there is too much regulation limiting this use (in the case of Barcelona city)." (Interview S1)

Finally, a European project about the third sector in Spain (Chaves et al., 2016: 49) points out such barriers for its development as following: (1) funding problems, especially lack of public funding and private individual contributions, (2) problems regarding labour, such as difficulties in recruiting volunteers and employees, low salaries, (3) governance problems, i.e. difficulties with volunteer board members, (4) image problems due to limited public awareness of the third sector, (5) legal and fiscal barriers (lack of a favourable tax treatment and of a clear legal status), (6) increasing bureaucracy, and (7) lack of supporting organisations[17], which could provide CSOs with consulting, studies, training, recruiting staff and volunteers, legal support or financing.

On the other hand, some studies on civil society in Spain mention other interesting challenges, such as adaptation to new demands and needs of society, development of quality systems of management and assessments of actions and activities.

Best practices: How CSOs respond to challenges

From the analysis of the interviews, the most important best practices and strategies were identified to overcome the current challenges through promoting more dialogue and cooperation between the sectors (public, private and civil society), while maintaining autonomy is mentioned. In relationship with the public sector, the need for NGOs to be proactive and make suggestions to the public administrations is discussed.

> "We live in a very complicated social context (...), in which cooperation between sectors is necessary, as is needed to revise the social pacts, strengthening the welfare state and the third sector (...) to strengthen the shared discourse and strengthen partnerships and cooperation because we cannot ourselves." (Interview S11)

For this, Chaves et al. (2016: 50) states some policy recommendations to enhance the Spanish Welfare Mix into an advanced public-third sector partnership and to enhance private engagement.

In more concrete terms, the enhancing cooperation between the public sector and NGOs means creations and avenues for communication and meeting spaces. Here, a number of the concrete best practices were presented in different regions:

Tables of civil dialogue of Bizkaia is a shared workspace and an instrument of stable, operational and bidirectional dialogue and cooperation. It is between the Department of Social Action of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia and organisations and networks in the Third Sector of Social Action with the presence in the Historic Territory[18]. The organisations participate in all the phases of public policies and work together with the public sector to elaborate a comparative diagnosis (considering two points of view, public and NGOs) and action proposals, to design and implement communication on access to social services as a right in a welfare state.

> "We started by reinforcing the participation of the third sector in the areas of governance and also in the sense of participatory democracy ... Overcoming the classic organs of only consultation ... we started with the principle of civil dialogue as is defined in the field of disability, formulated as the right of organisations to participate in all phases of public policies (design, implementation, evaluation, etc.)." (Interview S11)

Barcelona Association Congresses were held in 2002 and 2010-11 as a space to take collective awareness of the sector challenges together. The main aims and results were visibility of the city's associative network and development of cooperation platform. More than 400 organisations worked together in the fields of social recognition, financing and recovery of public spaces.[19] In the framework of the Second Congress, the idea of regular research of the third sector appeared, which was implemented through the Panoràmic studies.

> "From the Second Congress 137 proposals came on how to improve the participation inside the associations (...) There are proposals directed to the third sector and others directed to the public administration. They are proposals to improve the strength of civil society in Barcelona." (Interview S1)

Torre Jussana Center in Barcelona is a public service centre managed by the local associations and government, providing services for CSOs such as training, research, consulting on their daily operations and internal democracy. The centre has existed since 1996, but until 2008 it was lead exclusively by the city administration. Now it is managed in cooperation with CSOs to encourage the development of associations by offering services and resources that meet the needs of the sector, to promote, revitalise and strengthen the sector, to expand their influence in public policy:

> "It is a service to help the associations of the city, working from the sector itself and the generation of continuous knowledge." (Interview S3)

One of the results of cooperation between the local administration and the CSOs is presented by the **Law of the Third Social Sector of the region of Euskadi**, which promotes the mixed model of social intervention (collaborative management of services through conventions, concerts or collaborative frameworks, beyond public procurement)[20]. It was developed with the participation of local CSOs and recognises the crucial role of CSOs managing social services and their relationship with the public sector:

> "This law defines the third social sector and defines rights and obligations of organisations in the framework of collaboration with the public sector and business (...) it

17   See the explanation on p. 13 here: http://thirdsectorimpact.eu/site/assets/uploads/documentations/tsi-national-report-no-8-third-sector-barriers-spain/TSI-National-Report-No-8-Spain-77p-1x-.pdf

18   ¿Qué es la Mesa de Diálogo Civil de Bizkaia?, available at: http://www.bizkaia.eus/home2/Temas/DetalleTema.asp?Tem_Codigo=6860&Idioma=CA, in Spanish

19   2 on. Congrés de les Associacions de Barcelona, available at: www.cab.cat/2on-congres-de-les-associacions-de-barcelona.html, in Catalan

20   Ley del Tercer Sector Social de Euskadi: Bases y Recorridos, available at: www.fundacionede.org/ca/archivos/20160627-presentacion-jornada-gobierno-vasco.pdf, in Spanish

is a key aspect for us because promotes the collaborative management." (Interview S11)

Regarding the other aspects of the legal and financial regulations, such possible solutions were identified in interviews as a means of getting over legal and taxation barriers on CSO activities; better regulation for collaboration between businesses and third sector and for more encouragement of corporate social responsibility and engagement in business organisations of all sizes, not only in larger ones. Adaptation to the social clauses in public procurement (following the EU legislation) can also be an opportunity to improve the financing, impact and awareness raising of the CSOs.

Inside the civil society organisation, integration of a transversal way of work, i.e. broader vision of the complex problems, is mentioned as well as adaptation to new times, such as improving social media presence and crowdfunding. In this respect, synergies and partnerships to advance social and technological innovation are also important.

An interesting example of crowdfunding and public awareness is presented in the project **Compensa Natura**, which aims to raise awareness of the human ecological footprint. It is proposed that people compensate for the area (in m2) of their workplace or home by buying and protecting an equivalent area of habitat for wildlife. This environmental initiative is designed for both individuals/families and organisations/companies. At the moment there are open projects in Ecuador and Spain that allow preserving the ecosystems.

Public awareness and volunteering were well achieved through the project **"Multiply yourself": strengthening civil society by raising young lawyers with social responsibility**, which was described by a respondent in the following way:

> "The project is aimed on law students. We bring together law students, practising lawyers, professors and organised civil society. We give classes in the universities. It is about sensitisation of law students, as they often don't know how pro bono works, for instance. Or that there are networks, platforms and organisations, specialising on legal assistance, that help to organise these forms of voluntary work. And what we do is sow seeds so that they have a stronger social responsibility. We want them to understand that human rights are not only what you have in the Declaration, but they are here, they are on the street! We explain how practitioners work, how they can help real persons or civil society organisations. We tell them about our projects, about the different tendencies and experiences both in Europe and in Spain...Now we see how some of those who participated in our classes call us after finishing their studies and tell us: 'Listen, I remember your presentations and I would like to do something now.' And this is great, as we see that thanks to our work there are people who not only want to make money after finishing their studies but also help those around." (Interview S6)

Another example is connected with the development and application of new tools, which are shared by a number of CSOs for strengthening civil society. One of the respondents told about **Onodo**[21],

> "a website which is like a map of power relations in Spain. It is a permanent depository of information about persons and organisations with their official sources and corresponding documents. And we also do the analysis, so that you see the conflicts of interest. [...] Any organisation, or journalists, who want to do network analysis for their work, can use it" (Interview S5).

The application of experiences of the CSOs in other countries is mentioned as one of successful answer. For instance, an interviewee tells of a project that has its origin in the Netherlands, where the Postal Lottery was founded in 1989 by a coalition of about 80 CSOs, who

> "created a direct debit system because the lottery was not addictive. People pay 10 euro a month (about 120 per year) and every 15 days there is a raffle. Of the money raised, 50% is for NGOs, 30% is for prizes and 20% is for keeping the structure. Currently, they are giving a lot of money in this system, only the environmental organisations receive EUR 80 million each year." (Interview S9)

Moreover, in the research even some new opportunities were identified arising from the challenges, such as an incentive to reinvent own organisation, to improve and introduce innovations to counter fewer resources and complicated circumstances by taking preventive measures instead of the corrective ones. To improve the economic situation, diversification of financial sources is needed as well as the search for alliances with other organisations to enhance the social base. More transparency and accountability can also be translated into better social awareness and political influence.

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21   Every network tells a story, available at: https://onodo.org/

Conclusions

For the case of Spain, which is an example of the EU Southern countries, the consequences of the economic crisis for civil society organisations are especially important. The growth of the third sector has stopped and currently, economic and financial sustainability are common problems for the organisations. Some of them depend on public funding and this dependency is weakening the sector, by damaging small organisations especially. Therefore, financing and private donations appear to be the most important challenges for Spanish CSOs.

Additionally, there are other important challenges for Spanish CSOs, such as a need to reinforce the relationships between organisations and other sectors (state, private profit sector, academia, civil society and community) and to increase the CSOs' social base, which would be beneficial for their financial structure. Furthermore, organisational challenges exist, such as lack of transparency within CSOs, the need for professionalisation and the improvement of organisational management, etc.

On the other hand, some new opportunities, arising from the challenges, were identified. CSOs possibly gained an opportunity to reinvent themselves, to diversify their financial sources, to improve and introduce innovations to counter fewer resources and more complicated circumstances by taking preventive measures instead of simply corrective ones.

From the interviews, some CSOs strategies were identified that have helped to overcome the current challenges, such as more proactive measures towards public administrations, improvement of social media presence, increasing initiatives of crowdfunding, copying some practices of innovation from other countries, creation synergies and partnerships to advance in the social and technological innovation, etc.

It is also important to take into account that the civil society in Spain has important differences between regions, because of different levels of social and economic development as well as of different democratic cultures in the regions.

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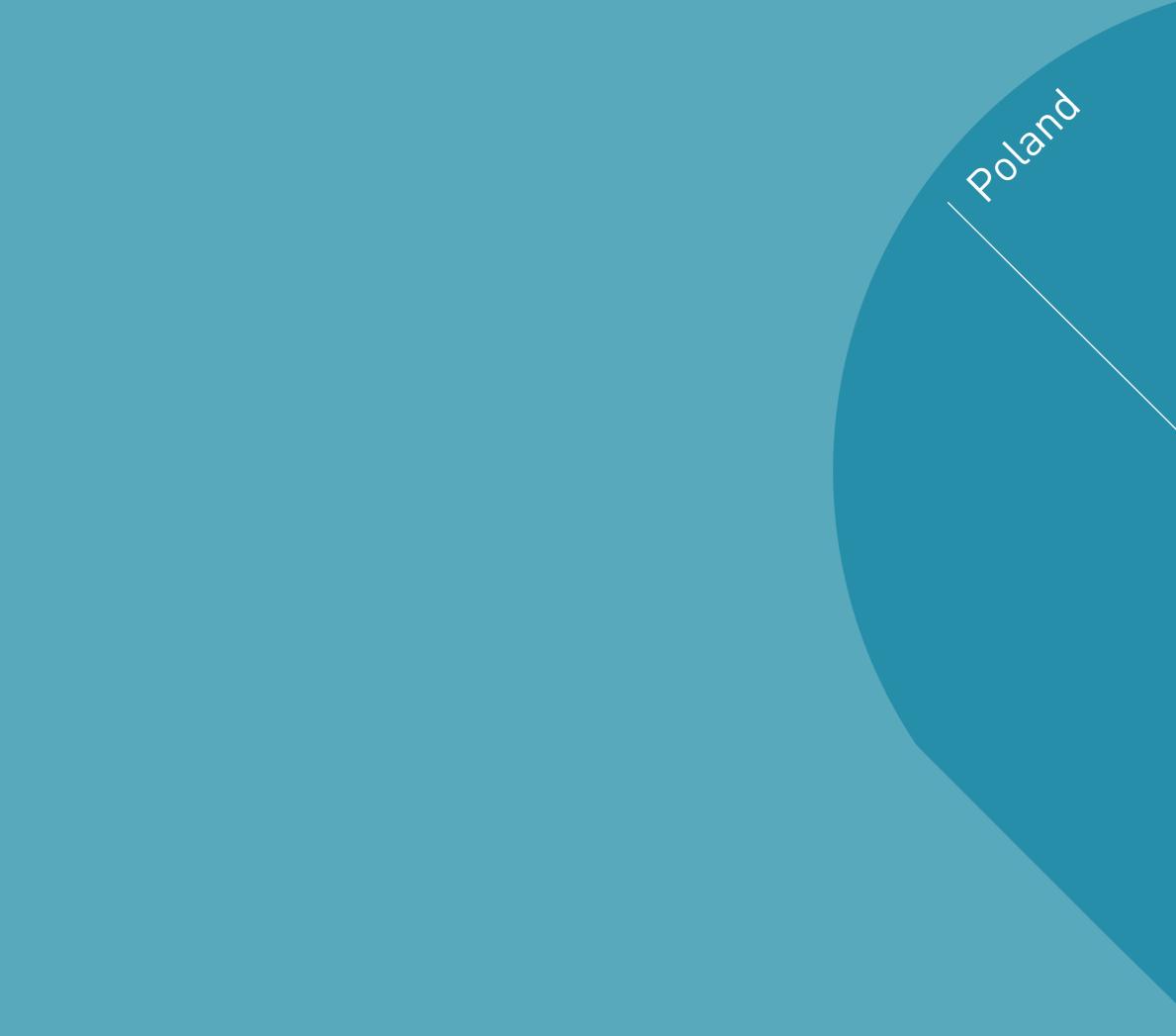
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List of interviews

Interview S1: regional NGO association
Interview S2: regional women NGO
Interview S3: national resource centre for NGOs
Interview S4: national foundation for NGOs
Interview S5: national NGO working on civil rights and issues
Interview S6: national foundation for NGOs
Interview S7: regional NGO working on migration and minorities issues
Interview S8: regional NGO working on social services
Interview S9: regional environmental NGO
Interview S10: local civil initiatives
Interview S11: regional NGOs research centre

Poland

Poland: Expecting Negative Trends

By Filip Pazderski

The case of Poland is very important and interesting in understanding current developments within the EU civil society in 2016, especially its members from Central and Eastern Europe. It demonstrates an important trend in the transformation of the CSOs' situation after the victory in October 2015 of a populist party, Law and Justice (PiS), which started the implementation of conservative and centralised policy, to some extent, following the Hungarian trend.

Therefore, it presents an opportunity to observe a case where there is a severe downturn in using practices of public dialogue between the central administration and civil society organisations since the governmental change after the last parliamentary elections in 2015. Some of the civic dialogue bodies have been dissolved or their meetings have not been organised, and public consultations have not been used during the legislation process by the government.

At the same time, CSOs started reporting various irregularities with the procedure of receiving public fund grants by the governmental authorities. Several calls have been suspended or cancelled without explanation. In a growing number of grant competitions organised by various ministries new NGOs were unexpectedly winning (having very little or no experience in the topic of the competition) and others, with long-term experience in these issues, were rejected without an explanation[22].

All above-mentioned events have happened alongside a dispute with the Constitutional Court initiated by the ruling party, which led to the executive power gaining control over it. In addition, PiS has taken control over the public media, and selected NGOs have started being presented in a negative way. The culmination of this process was a defamation campaign that began at the end of October and lasted until the beginning of December 2016. In the main public news programme, certain NGOs were presented as related to the political opposition and misusing public funds for private purposes. The prime minister and some other prominent representatives of the government joined in by declaring that NGOs in the country need stronger control, since some of them had used public funds for political purposes.

As a result, a new law has been announced. It provides the administration with a centralised way to oversee the civil society sector by establishing a new agency responsible directly to the prime minister and composed mostly of government representatives. This new body will be authorised to govern the development of the NGO sector. It will have control over the distribution of all governmental funds dedicated to CSO development as well as European and other international financial support.

This political context and its latest developments should be considered while reading the report, presented below, with the research conducted within Polish civil society organisations and by its representatives. However, it must be noted here that the most recent

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22   Information about such events are collected by CSOs in one repository, available at: http://repozytorium.ofop.eu/.

events, including the smear campaign related to several CSOs in public media and the initiative to establish a new governmental agency dedicated to supporting civil society (or controlling it, as most CSO sector activists are afraid of) are not reflected in the research results described in this text since they occurred after the research forming the basis for this report was conducted.

Polish civil society sector in numbers

The current character of the civil society sector in Poland has been developed alongside the political transformation in the country from the very beginning. Thus, the events of 1989 and the years that came later incited the evolution of the civil society and the dynamic development of the non-governmental sector.

Throughout the 1990s, with financial support from North American foundations and strong domestic actors, civil society in Poland continued to develop, with only minor legal modifications to certain regulations (Gliński 2003, Makowski 2008). However, at the beginning of the 21st century, some serious signs of stagnation were observed as the dynamic development of the third sector slowed down. Already existing CSOs had become estranged from their local environments (Juros et al. 2014). In addition, after 2000 it was quite clear, from the economic development and political process that were taking place, that Poland would finally enter the European Union. In response to this, American donors gradually lessened their financial support for Central-Eastern Europe.

This has made civic sector representatives push to work out new, more sustainable means of financing the sector. First, one of the solutions and a big hope was in the European funds. It turned out that they replaced previous American funding to only a minor extent. Second, endeavours were taken up to establish mechanisms for stable relationships and cooperation with the public sector, which was perceived as a strong partner and a source of a large amount of funding.

This was joined by the EU-accession procedures, which "forced the decision-makers to get acknowledged with the matter of civil society and the problems of the third sector" (Makowski 2012: 5) and perceive CSOs as useful partners.

Number of CSOs: According to the most recent available data, about 17,000 foundations and 100,000 associations (excluding approximately 16,000 Voluntary Fire Brigades, which often are excluded from the core of the civil sector) have been registered in Poland since the beginning of 2016[23]. However, it is estimated that roughly a quarter of registered organisations are inactive (because of the lack of legal obligation to de-register inactive CSOs). Therefore, it can be estimated that around 90,000 foundations and associations are actively operating in Poland now.

Areas of work: When we look at what Polish CSOs are doing, we need to distinguish between where they operate and the different kinds of activities they do. The reason is that most CSOs are committed to different areas of work to increase their chances of funding.

23   Central Statistical Office of Poland, Local Data Bank (BDL).

Research on the CSO sector conducted by the Klon/Jawor Association shows that the main field of Polish CSO activity did not change very much for years, although it has slowly been decreasing from 39% in 2004. The three following positions have not changed much either.

The percentage of Polish CSOs that stated they were involved in certain types of activity in 2015 looks as follows:

The situation differed only slightly when organisations were given the possibility to indicate more than one answer. The situation around the end of 2015 looked as follows:

Activity	%
Sport, tourism, recreation, hobby	34%
Education and upbringing	15%
Culture and art	13%
Social services, social assistance	8%
Health	7%
Local development	6%
Environmental protection	2%
Labour market, employment, professional activation	2%
Scientific research	2%
Supporting NGOs and civil initiatives	2%
Law, human rights, political activity	2%
Professional, workers, sectoral issues	1%
Rescue, security, defence	1%
Religion	1%
International activity	1%
Other kinds of activities	5%

Table 13. The percentage of Polish CSOs that declared involvement in certain types of activity (only one choice)

Activity	%
Sport, tourism, recreation, hobby	55%
Education and upbringing	53%
Culture and art	35%
Local development	21%
Social services, social assistance	21%
Health	20%
Environmental protection	14%
Supporting NGOs and civil initiatives	13%
Labour market, employment, professional activation	10%
Scientific research	10%
Law, human rights, political activity	8%
International activity	6%
Professional, workers, sectoral issues	4%
Religion	3%
Rescue, security, defence	3%
Other kinds of activities	7%

Table 14. The percentage of Polish CSOs that declared involvement in certain types of activity (multiple choices)

Source: Adamiak et al. 2016

People in organisations: According to the Klon/Jawor Association's research (Adamiak et al. 2016: 49-50), almost half (45%) of organisations rely solely on volunteer work, with no paid staff. One or more permanent or regular employees (working at least once a week) work in more than one third (35%) of foundations and associations. From a group of CSOs employing permanent paid staff, a larger number of organisations (20% of all Polish CSOs) employ at least one person on a contractual basis. In 15% of organisations all employees work on other formal agreements. In addition, 20% of organisations, although they do not have a single person employed on a permanent basis, outsource a paid job from time to time (a few or dozen times a year or less).

There is a continuous increase in the number of foundations and associations that benefit from volunteers. In 2015, 61% of CSOs did exactly that. On the other hand, the number of Poles who say they have volunteered in the past 12 months remains unchanged during

recent years. Approximately 20% of adult Poles said they engaged "in volunteer and non-paid work on behalf of their local community, neighbours, village, city or people that need help" during 2016 (Boguszewski 2016: 10). In a similar survey, 19-20% of respondents said they had engaged "in non-paid work for social organisations or informal groups" in 2015-16[24].

However, it seems that the level of declared engagement in volunteering might be influenced by the of understanding of the term "volunteering" or "doing something for others". The numbers get much higher (up to 78%) when people are asked about informal volunteering (doing something for others, for their local community or natural environment without any assistance from the CSOs).

Legal framework and financing

The background for Polish CSO operation is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland adopted in 1997. It guarantees the basic right to unrestricted activity to various social organisations, from the political parties and trade unions, through foundations and associations, to social movements and other voluntary associations. In addition, its pre-amble conveys another rule that is important for civil society. It gives society the ability to decide on the mode of their existence and about public matters to the smallest possible social circles: families, communities and citizens' associations. It does, however, oblige the state administration to assist these social structures in their activities. The Subsidiarity rule has influenced the legal framework related to the CSO activity, including the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Voluntary Work.

The Law on Foundations, the first law regulating the mode of operation of one of the main legal forms constituting civil society in Poland was adopted in 1984. However, it was in 1989 when new developments brought a real boost to the sector. These developments were brought about by activists from the anti-communist opposition movement organised in the Civic Committees created in June 1989, who won the first (though still not fully democratic) elections. Committed to the further democratisation of the country, they proposed and adopted a new bill that same year: the Law on Associations. This act was crucial for the development of CSOs in Poland, and it triggered the creation of almost 23,000 associations in the first few years after the adoption of the new law (Juros et al. 2014).

 The Law on Associations regulates the rules of establishing and operating the two basic types of associations: regular and registered. Regular associations are small entities that can be established by a minimum of three people, who have to make rules for the associa-tion's activity and submit a request to include the new entity into a register of associations. Since May 2016 regular associations are allowed to finance their activities not only from membership fees but also from external grants (including from public institutions)[25].They cannot have economic activity, however.

Figure 18. The share of different sources of funding of the sector in 2014

Source: Klon / Jawor Association 2016 (Adamiak et al. 2016: 65)

Registered associations have a duty to register in a special court and must be composed of at least seven members (since May 2016[26]). They are rather formalised with statutory organs, a professional accounting system, legal identity and the right to conduct economic activity (whose profit is free from taxation as long as it is intended for the statutory objectives). Possessing full legal identity enables them to apply for grants from other organisations or public administration, lead economic activity and take up other obligations.

The Law on Foundations establishes the modes of operation for the second main type of non-governmental organisation: foundations. Their activity is not related to the people who formed them but to a specified amount of money raised to pursue a socially or economically useful aim. Foundations also operate in formalised manner, similar to many associations.

Both types of mentioned NGOs may acquire the special status of a Public Benefit Organisation (OPP) and fall under the supervision of local (associations) or central (foundations) administration.

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24 Klon / Jawor Association: surveys 2006-2015; See also another data on social activity surveyed without addressing to a word "volunteering" in: Walczak, Pazderski 2015.

25 Amendments made to the above-mentioned act on associations since 2015 (as regular associations could not incur any obligations before) is the largest modification of this law since its introduction in 1989.

26 See: Ustawa z dnia 25 września 2015 r. o zmianie ustawy – Prawo o stowarzyszeniach oraz niektórych innych ustaw (Dz.U. 2015 poz. 1923).

To understand the role of the different sources used to finance the Polish third sector, the picture drawn from the Klon/Jawor Association research might be helpful (Adamiak et al. 2016: 65). Polish organisations use membership fees (60%) the most, and then local administration funds (55%). Then, private donations (45%), institutional and business donations (35%), 1% tax mechanism (23%), central administration/government (18%) and European Union (18%) follow as well as some other sources, as shown by the Figure 25 below.

The 1% tax mechanism was established in April 2003 with the new Law on Public Benefit Activity and Voluntary Work. It was a milestone in terms of the relationship between the public administration and CSOs, especially at the level of local government. The 1% tax mechanism, included in this law, allocates a percentage of each Pole's income tax to third sector funding.

However, an interesting feature of the Polish third sector is shown by the share of revenues collected by the CSOs from different sources in terms of the total amount of sector revenue. The data for 2014 presented in Figure 26 show the largest amount of funding accessed by Polish associations and foundations is public, coming from the European Union, local or central administration. The other sources of funding form a relatively small part of all assets gathered within the sector.

The use of the 1% tax mechanism (an option for taxpayers to designate 1% of their income tax to an organisation with public benefit status) continues to increase. In the 2014 tax year, around 12.5 million individuals designated 557 million Polish zloty (approximately 129.5 million euro) to the 7,888 organisations that are eligible for this support, around 50 million Polish zloty more than previously, (CSO Sustainability Index 2015 – Poland, https://www.usaid.gov/europe-eurasia-civil-society).

At the same time, individual philanthropy continues to decrease as many citizens consider the 1% mechanism to be a sufficient form of philanthropy. Some CSOs have begun to use different crowd-funding web platforms to raise funds for their initiatives. The 2015 World Giving Index showed an increase in donations, with 29% of respondents reporting that they donated to charities in 2014, compared to 21% in the previous year (ibidem).

In addition, an increasing number of CSOs are becoming more aware of the possibility of earning money for the services they provide, which still have to be in line with the social goal of the organisation. According to the Klon/Jawor Association (Adamiak et al. 2016: 65), more CSOs (11% of all organisations in the country) were collecting fees and donations to recover costs for their services in 2014, compared to three years ago (9%). Most associations (60%) collect membership fees, but they are a smaller amount and do not provide significant revenue for the entities collecting them. In result, money from membership fees constituted no more than 3% of the total amount of the sector's revenues in 2014. Similarly, fees and donations collected by CSOs to recover costs for their services constituted only 4% of the total amount of the sector's revenues in the same year (Adamiak et al. 2016: 71).

CSOs are traditionally seen as the emanation of civil society, but they definitely do not cover the entire range of possible civic activities. This is especially true with the development of ICT technologies. These enable more individuals to become civil journalists and bloggers who monitor their local authorities and mobilise their local communities to act. This is increasingly being used. According to a study completed in February 2016, 7% of respondents have written online on topics related to local issues and 6%, on political issues (Roguska 2016: 4).

Over the past few years we can also observe the growing importance of different social movements. It probably started from informal urban movements and social movements for tenants' rights protection and turned into massive protest movements that have developed since the parliamentary elections in autumn 2015, such as the women's movement protesting against attempts to tighten up the abortion law.

All of these examples show a new trend. Poles are organising themselves in an informal way instead of establishing new CSOs or cooperating with already existing ones. A possible explanation for this trend might be the perception of CSOs within Polish society. The most obvious ones in the media are large foundations, primarily engaged in collecting public money and helping those in need. This creates an untrue picture in suggesting most organisations are responsible for collection and management of large sums of money without much transparency (Adamiak 2015: 6-7).

In addition, some people's reluctance to engage in CSO activity is also caused by tight bureaucratic requirements related to CSO work, according to 80% of respondents involved in an informal social activity, and the burden of financial obligations, according to 73% of informal social activists (Walczak/Pazderski 2015: 158).

Revenues from own propety	1%
Other sources	2%
Revenues from public collections and campaigns	2%
Foreign public sources from outsides the EU	2%
Bank interest, gains from solid capital, shares	3%
Support from national NGOs	3%
Support from foreign NGO	3%
Membership fees	3%
Paid statutory activity	4%
Institutional & business donations	4%
1% tax mechanism	5%
Economic activity	7%
Private donations	9%
Central administration / governament	15%
Local administration	15%
European Union funds	23%

0%   5%   10%   15%   20%   25%

Figure 19. Share of revenues collected by the CSOs from different sources in 2014 as total amount of sector's revenues

Source: Klon / Jawor Association 2016 (Adamiak et al. 2016: 71)

Data

The online questionnaire was sent to nearly 200 Polish CSOs, their networks and mailing lists as well as being published on the main Polish web portal for the third sector (NGO.pl). As result, 56 answers were collected, although there were not as many answers to the open questions, undoubtedly because they required more time.

In the survey, different kinds of organisations' representatives took part. The most popular activity fields were "youth and education" and "human rights" (17 choices for each of them; more than one answer was possible). However, the biggest group was the "other" category (27 choices). There were many kinds of answers, including supporting other CSOs, civil society and social enterprises (9 choices), working on humanitarian and development support (4), local democracy/community building and public participation (3), rural areas' development (3), supporting migrants, refugees and minorities (2), economic development (2), social services, elderly people and intergenerational dialogue, gender equality, advocacy and people with disabilities in the labour market. One answer even pointed out that a question was framed in rather old-fashioned categorisation of the CSO sector, since nowadays they lead more interdisciplinary activities.

However, the group of CSOs that participated in the survey do not perfectly reflect the Polish third sector, as it is shown above. Entities working in the most popular field (including the biggest group formed by sport associations) seem not to be connected to "the core" of organised civil society in Poland, which is involved in dialogue with the central administration and civil dialogue bodies operating at governmental level.

The most CSOs surveyed had existed for 10 to 20 years (45%), for 6 to 10 years (32%), and for more than 20 years (13%). No newly established organisation (existing for less than 1 year) took part in the survey and only 11% are quite young (between 1 and 5 years old).

The clear majority of the organisations participating in the survey were those with a smaller number of people (employers, volunteers, members) involved in their activities. For 21.3% it was less than 10 people, whereas for 57.5% it was between 10 and 50 people. Only 11% of organisations had between 50 and 100 people, and 10% more than 100 people in total.

Most surveyed organisations worked mostly on the national (48.9%) and international levels (36.2%), followed by the CSOs operating at regional (29.8%) and local (17% in the rural communities, another 17% in non-capital city/town and 6% in the capital city only) levels. It means that most surveyed CSOs were larger ones, not locally based, which also reflects the condition of the Polish third sector.

Challenges for CSOs in Poland

As the survey results show, in the opinion of the largest group of CSOs (37.5%, n=56) the situation of their organisation during the past 3 years became worse; 25.8% of CSOs admitted that it had not changed significantly, and for 23.2% it has improved. For 12.5% of CSOs, it was difficult to evaluate this.

When it comes to the particular factors influencing the CSOs' operation, the worst aspect of the majority of the CSOs' situation is difficulties with private donations, state support, and financing in general. On the contrary, the most positive factors identified were volunteering and the legal framework, which also got a large number of neutral ratings (Figure 20).
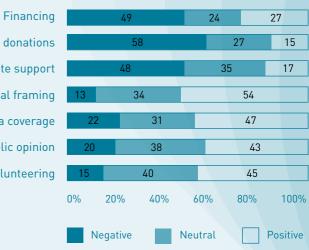
In sum, these results show that there are positive trends within the Polish third sector when it comes to CSOs gaining support and recognition from the society through media and public opinion, as well as citizens' involvement. However, financial aspects of CSOs activity and public administration support to them are more negative.

Such observations of the sector situation are even more noticeable when we look at main challenges and problems indicated by the CSO representatives. Over the past 12 months[27], Polish civil society has faced several major challenges. These include, first, problems with financial stability and diversity as well as access to public funding, especially EU funds. Next the respondents saw a lack of awareness of the sector's needs by society and the authorities as an issue. In addition, when we look at the answers provided as the second and third choices, we see that two more obstacles appear as important for the sector: the way in which the new government operates (including the attitude it has taken towards civic issues) towards particular CSOs as well as internal problems facing the whole sector, forcing CSOs to change operational procedures and reorganise staff (see all answers in Table 15 below).

Figure 20. Evaluation of the conditions for the CSOs (n=56)

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Financing	49	24	27
Private donations	58	27	15
State support	48	35	17
Legal framing	13	34	54
Media coverage	22	31	47
Public opinion	20	38	43
Volunteering	15	40	45

27 In order to analyse data collected in the open question number 3 of the survey, all the answers were grouped into 8 broader categories and a category "No answer / I don't know" has been added, where all missing or incomplete information cases were counted.

	1st choice (n=56)	2nd choice (n=54+2)	3rd choice (n=51+5)
Problems with financial stability / diversification of sources of funding	19.6%	10.7%	8.9%
Problems with public funding, mainly from the EU (with new financial perspective)	16.1%	5.4%	7.1%
Lack of awareness of the sector needs in the society and authorities and education on this topic / negative social attitudes towards the sector, its image	12.5%	12.5%	5.4%
New government/authorities mode of action (i.e. anti-constitutional, ignoring citizens, supporting selected organisations) and related divisions in society	10.7%	30.4%	14.3%
Other internal problems, incl. the need for reorganisation the operation, related to personnel and the whole sector - need to change the way it works	7.1%	23.2%	25%
Legal / systemic change defining the framework for functioning and manner of their adoption	8.9%	0%	7.1%
Unfavourable social attitudes (i.e. rise of xenophobia, negative attitudes towards refugees, migrants)	3.6%	3.6%	5.4%
Excessive bureaucracy	3.6%	1.8%	1.8%
No answer / I don't know	7.1%	12.5%	16.1%

Table 15. Main challenges that CSOs have faced in the country last year (n=56)

The CSO representatives indicated similar problems in relation to the situation of their own organisations (see full set of grouped answers in Table 16 below[28]). In this case, the decrease in funds available for activities and the need to diversify funding sources were the most popular answers.

In addition, organisational problems, such as lack of human resources, work overload, lack of knowledgeable employees and even the threat to further existence appeared. Other significant challenges identified in the responses were related to the need for adopting new solutions within the organisation as well as adjusting to legal or systemic changes and new formal requirements that have appeared.

28   For the way how all answers received in the question 4 were grouped into 12 categories – see the footnote above.

Some interesting information relating to these challenges was added in the write-in boxes. In relation to problems with EU funds, one of the CSOs representatives said:

"Prolonged waiting for new EU projects, the desire to continue the important social processes and preserve valuable staff without certain financing activities led to the necessity to credit activity and serious indebtedness of the organisation. Nevertheless, due to financial reasons I had to abandon collaboration with approx. 80% of the staff in 2015, including many unique, committed experts."

A representative of the CSO emphasised the unpredictability of the political sphere as well as problems with spending the funds from the new EU Financial Perspective, explained:

"Theoretically, the authorities act according to the law. It does not matter if citizens' opinions differ from the government's. Public consultations are announced at short notice. Execution of public tasks often requires, in addition to a specific percentage of your own contribution, the organisation's larger time and financial investments."

Another two CSO activists have added to this:

"Personnel changes were connected to the organisation of replacements and hiring new team members. Financial liquidity problems were caused by delays in the preparation of agreements by donors, which shows the abuse of grant giving against the NGOs. They are used to perform tasks for the administration, but they do not receive support for their development and ensured sustainability."

"We are a watchdog organisation and deal with human rights. In recent months, we have had a lot of substantive work that could not wait (meaning a huge overload for the team and lack of time for internal work)... It is also necessary to find new methods of work because the current government does not listen to anybody, so 'old methods' for legal acts and attempts to engage in substantive discussion do not work."

The most significant modification, as the survey shows, has been the latest political change in Poland, which has impacted CSOs working with minority groups. As two representatives of CSOs in this field pointed out:

"After the political change in Poland there has been a modification of the priorities in the financing of non-governmental organisations dealing with issues of refugees."

	1st choice (n=49+1)	2nd choice (n=42+8)	3rd choice (n=33+17)
Cooperation with the administration (central or local) / hindered dialogue	6%	8%	8%
Adjusting the functioning to the legal changes / systemic / formal requirements (and their quality)	10%	4%	0%
Reducing funds for activities / need to search them from diversified sources	28%	18%	6%
Cooperation with business	4%	2%	0%
Lack of awareness of the authorities / society on the sector needs (+negative attitude)	2%	0%	2%
Bureaucratisation of work	4%	2%	0%
Responding to authorities political activities / their adverse effect on the operation of CSOs	6%	4%	2%
Organisational problems / lack of people / work overload / lack of knowledge among employees (on law on NGOs) / threat to organisation existence	8%	20%	10%
Sector self-organisation	2%	0%	2%
Unfavourable social attitudes / hate speech / aversion to immigrants and other minorities	4%	0%	4%
Need for new solutions in the organisation / entering new areas of activity	10%	6%	14%
Mobilisation of the society	0%	2%	0%
No answer / I don't know	16%	34%	50%

Table 16. Main challenges faced over the last year by own organisation (n=50)

> "There is reluctance to help, support and engage in dialogue with LGBT organisations. All the activities of public authorities are ridiculing, belittling the value and dignity of this group, as well as show and give permission (which willingly goes down to the citizens) for hatred, violence and aggression."

However, what is quite alarming, especially concerning the possibility of further development in the sector, is the loss of motivation. In the opinion of another surveyed CSO expert:

> "Members of the organisation lose the motivation to work if they do not see interest from the public side (authorities)."

Best practices: How CSOs respond to challenges

The challenges for the Polish third sector that were declared in the survey and presented above have pushed some of the CSOs to look for new solutions, sometimes of a quite innovative character. They were reflected during the in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of 10 chosen organisations who declared an interest in taking part in this stage of the research in their surveys. Before we start the analysis, we have to admit that the third sector in Poland is rather fragmented:

> "There is nothing like a single third sector in Poland, there are rather separate sectors,"

as one of the interviewees said (Interview P8).

CSOs working in different areas, such as human rights, people with disabilities, as watchdogs as well as delivering social services operate under different conditions. Their relationships with authorities also differ. CSOs in the larger cities have different opportunities from those operating in smaller or remote locations. These differing circumstances need to be acknowledged. Nevertheless, the observations coming from these interviews might be interesting for diversified CSOs in Poland.

During the interviews, the main challenges for Polish civil society were also discussed. In that respect, participants mentioned lack of trust towards public institutions, low level of social capital, problems with cross-sectorial cooperation (between CSOs and administration), deep divisions within the society, hatred towards minority groups and attacks on the CSOs working with them, lack of public authorities' interest in the needs of part of the third sector (especially "liberal" ones), as well as their adverse attitude towards civil society and public participation. In addition, a significant part of the obstacles mentioned was related to financial issues, such as problems with access to public funds (including a break in EU funds distribution), inability to keep financial stability of the organisation and the need to look for financial diversity, including learning how to open up to get support from the public.

During the interviews, several positive trends also came to light. Among them, the most prominent seem to be: a growing perception of the CSOs as experts within particular fields, which has enabled them to take part effectively in drafting public policies (with some successes, "a foot was stuck in the door" (Interview P10) as one of the interviewees said), sector professionalisation and its stability, the adoption of new mechanisms for local communities mobilisation (like Community Led Local Development[29]) and a larger part of EU funds being devoted to supporting civil society development in 2014-20. One of the respondents observed that people are a biggest asset of the sector (Interview P8).

Several positive trends have appeared in response to challenges. One of these is consolidation within the sector, where different thematic coalitions have been established in response to the government policies (e.g. Citizens Observatory of Democracy[30]).

29   Community-Led Local Development, available at: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld_en.

30   Citizens Observatory of Democracy, available at: http://citizensobservatory.pl/.

Civic mobilisation in the society can be observed in the massive levels of participation in public demonstrations. In addition, some organisations should learn how to work with people to gain their financial support, introducing changes in their operational procedures. One of the respondents also observed that shrinking human resources in the sector can also have a kind of positive effect in the selection of employees, as only the most committed employees will remain. As he said:

> "Every crisis can be an impulse for further development." (Interview P6)

This complex situation of the sector that has been presented had led several CSOs to introduce innovative ways to cope with these challenges. Three chosen examples are briefly described below.

Strategic Road Map for Civil Sector Development

In response to the perceived stagnation in the sector, and with many CSOs losing sight of their mission as they are subcontracted more and more government/public authorities work, CSOs from different parts of the country have launched a new movement. It has led to the drafting of a strategic document establishing directions and areas for the development of the CSO sector in Poland: "Strategic Road Map for Civil Sector Development".

The whole process has taken two-three years and has been conducted in a participatory way. During its course 33 main directions of third sector activity have been established, and partnerships have been formed between organisations from different parts of the country. Their work aims to further develop each of these topics and has been led by appointed moderators. An important aspect of this work is related to re-formulating the third sector's role towards the administration. After working out its own agenda and policy proposals, the third sector can become stronger in its dialogue with authorities. United CSOs can more easily exert pressure on politicians in order to convince them to use certain solutions in their policy proposals related to civil society matters. As an interviewee describing this process said, this activity responds to "a need for raising awareness of the sector's interests, taken as a whole". (Interview P3)

Balanced scorecard

One of the organisations working on international and intercultural dialogue, whose representative was interviewed, adopted a special tool to measure operational effects and strategic management. The tool, which comes from the US, was adopted for public and non-governmental entities of a certain size. However, to implement this tool an organisation should invest a month of work with about 10 of their own employees, who form a steering unit that meets regularly (once a week) for a longer period of time (at least several months). This group is responsible for drafting organisations' evaluation criteria, tailored to specific organisational characteristics and field of work. Based on these criteria, organisations are regularly assessed. In addition, the organisation's employee and beneficiary satisfaction is also measured. This gives employees and CSO beneficiaries a way to influence how an organisation develops. Based on the findings, modifications to the organisation's

way of operation can be recommended to the managing staff. However, the organisation (mainly through its board) still decides if any recommendations will be implemented.

Diversifying CSOs support and using crowd-funding

With a pause in access to EU funding and uncertainty related to what the government will do with civil society, several organisations have begun to look for alternative sources of funding and larger social support. For one organisation, it was also an element of their own identity, related to the core of its mission. As a representative of this CSO put it,

> "For a watchdog organisation like us, it is obvious that we do not take funding from public bodies to preserve our independence." (Interview P5)

However, this was not an easy conclusion to reach.

> "About two years ago we came to the conclusion that a large grant we had was going to finish and we won't have anything to replace it. Thus, we started to prepare ourselves,"

as he goes on to explain. The organisation had to make personnel-related restructuring and some of the staff left. Those who remained, including managing staff, had to cut their salaries. At the same time, they started training themselves to operate differently. They have also moderated discussions on this issue in the watchdog CSO environment.

Some money has also been invested in training on fundraising and the use of social media. The latter has become a very important tool of communication with supporters and the target community (which itself has been created during this process). Messages based on attaining results and on creating change have been used. At the same time, the organisation began seeking financial support and a network of followers has collected funding through the 1% tax mechanism.

> "Now I know that it is no shame to ask people for money. We do it quite openly and without hesitation," the interviewee concludes (Interview P5).

Another organisation that works with people with disabilities went through a lot before certain developments regarding financing their activities were adopted.

> "We had to release a large majority of our employees, including many very committed and qualified experts. Only 70 out of 250 staff members remained. Also two of our local branches had to be closed down. (...) We also had to take a bank loan in order to maintain our activity." (Interview P10)

These funds were invested in training communication skills and working with an advertising company.

As a result, their own fundraising platform has been launched, aiming to collect money for concrete assistance for people with disabilities. This platform has been placed on a separate website with its own name and containing testimonials from individuals who have already received assistance from the organisation. As a representative of this CSO admits: "It has not resulted in large financial support until now… [the platform was started just before the Interview – F.P.] But our activities are not so catchy like some of the others, who can more easily attract positive feelings and support, i.e. related to children. But there are also other, positive side effects of this activity: while changing the content of our communication towards more beneficiaries of our work oriented we were able to rethink our operation and turn back to the initial mission of our organisation." (Interview P10)

These examples show that even in spite of very negative development, the CSOs are searching and finding new opportunities for their development.

Conclusions

As the research shows, the situation of Polish civil society organisations has worsened during the past 12 months. The attitude of the governmental authorities was reversed towards civil society, as well as their openness to civic dialogue. Government reluctance to support part of the third sector financially has occurred alongside the limitation of access to the EU funds, caused by prolonged starting procedures in the main competitions. Thus, there are negative trends in CSO financing and state support.

In addition, organisational problems, such as lack of human resources, work overload, lack of knowledgeable employees and even a threat to continued existence also appeared. The need to adopt new solutions within organisations and adjust operations to legal and financial changes also arose.

The CSOs working on human rights, especially with different minority groups, are in the most difficult position because the public discourse surrounding these issues has become more discriminatory and to greater extent contaminated with hate speech.

At the same time, some positive trends in the Polish third sector are also observed when it comes to CSOs gaining support and recognition from the society through media and public opinion, as well as greater citizen's involvement.

Moreover, the challenges have motivated CSOs to act. The sector began to organise itself and several thematic coalitions have been established. In addition, some CSOs started to change their operational procedures and opened themselves up more to the people. This helped to build circles of followers and supporters.

These steps created some potential for counteracting the main problems of the Polish civic sector that had been pointed out for years. CSOs were seen as being too dependent on public support and detached from society. If the Polish civic sector can become more rooted in specific communities, it gives hope for a better future.

The latest legislative initiatives, especially the establishment of the new governmental agency monitoring CSOs, and the smear campaign in public media, which has presented CSOs in a negative light, might also affect the development of the civil sector. Their advancements after 2016 and further results need to be observed, since these events may hinder the CSOs' development as well as give them additional obstacles to overcome. However, if organisations are able to overcome them through intensified work, new internal arrangements and innovative solutions, civil society in Poland could emerge from this situation even stronger.

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List of interviews

Interview P1: national NGO operating as a representation for local organisations working in rural areas
Interview P2: national organisation working in human rights and minority support
Interview P3: national federation of other NGOs and their networks
Interview P4: transnational organisation working in human rights oversight and promotion
Interview P5: national watchdog organisation
Interview P6: transnational youth education and cultural dialogue organisation
Interview P7: translational organisation working in human rights, tolerance and cultural dialogue by using cultural and artistic initiatives
Interview P8: regional organisation working in public participation and research
Interview P9: national union of associations (NGOs federation) working in social services sphere
Interview P10: local organisation working in social and professional activation of people with disabilities

Hungary

Hungary: Advanced Negative Trends

By Bulcsú Hunyadi and Veszna Wessenauer

Hungary presents an important and unique case through which to further explore the current situation for civil society organisations in EU countries. On the one hand, it is a prominent example of a new EU member state, and on the other, it has been a leader in the introduction of restrictive measures and policy towards civil society organisations in recent years. The case of Hungary shows how the civil society, which evolved rapidly and developed in a promising way after the fall of Communism, has become dependent on the state and detached from its constituency (the society), as well as failing to establish cooperation within the sector. This has made CSOs vulnerable to the state and paved the way for interventions on the basis of political interests.

Hungary also represents a special case because it is the first EU member state in which the government has applied restrictive measures against the civil society in a strategic manner to exclude it from decision-making processes, limit its scope of action and financial resources and silent its criticism. The government's actions have proved that the work of CSOs can be rendered impossible via legal and administrative measures within the existing legal framework without additional legislation against the civil sector.

Because the "closing space for civil society" has become a general trend around the world, and "bad practices" against CSOs have spread from country to country, it is important to study this process and its implications in more detail.

Hungarian civil society in numbers[31]

According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) and the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, institutions that count as non-profits fulfil a list of five criteria based on an internationally accepted standard. They are the following: (1) institutionalised (2) independent of the government (3) self-governed (4) without the distribution of profits and (5) voluntary and unprompted servicing and operating within the legal framework in effect and registered as an independent legal personality.

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) ranks non-profit organisations in three categories[32]:

→ private foundations and different forms of associations are categorised as classical civil society organisations;

→ public bodies, trade unions, professional or employer organisations and conjunctions are categorised as interest representation groups;

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31 At the time of writing the study in October 2016, the statistical data was only available for 2014. If nothing else is indicated, the source of information presented in the chapter is: „The main traits of the nonprofit sector" Statistical Mirror 2015/98. 2015.12.22., available at: www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/stattukor/nonprofit/nonprofit14.pdf

32 Methodology – Economic and nonprofit organisations, available at: www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/modsz/modsz32.html

→   public foundations and non-profit economic associations are categorised as other non-profit organisations or non-profit enterprises.

In 2014, 63,894 organisations were present in Hungary, 87.5% of these are categorised as classical civil society organisations (55,870); 57% of registered civil society organisations operated in Budapest and only 6.9% of them in smaller places.[33] Foundations and associations are more likely to work locally than nationally.

Out of 21,954 foundations in total, 20,678 (94.2%) belong to classical civil society. Generally, foundations are mostly active in the following fields: education (32.5%), social care (15.9%), culture (14.5%), healthcare (9.5%), settlement development (3.5%) and religion (5.4%).

As far as membership organisations (associations) are concerned, 83.9% of total 41,940 organisations of this type (35,192) belong to classical civil society. The share of these organisations was particularly high in the following areas: free-time activities and hobbies (24.1%), sport (16.5%), culture (13.3%), representation of professional, economic interests (8.4%), settlement development (6.2%), social care (5.1%) and protection of public order (5%).

Figure 21. Basic indicators of classical civil society organisations' weight within the sector, 2014

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)

Figure 22. Human resources indicators of classical civil society organisations' weight within the sector, 2014

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)

Number of employees and volunteers by the type of organisation

In 2014, almost 153,000 people worked in the sector. Within the classical civil society organisations, which amount to 87% of all civil society organisations, 31% of all involved people were employed and 96% of all the volunteers' time was spent at classical civil society organisations, as defined by the Central Statistical Office.

Sixty-nine percent of paid employees worked at the non-profits of the capital city or those in the county seats, while a quarter of them were employed in smaller cities and only 7% in villages.[34]

The approximate number of volunteers in the sector was 490,000 in 2014. In total, their 55 million hours of work is equal to 26,600 full-time jobs; 95.3% of all volunteers worked at classical civil society organisations, which equals to 25,400 full-time employees. The work carried out by volunteers equals HUF 57.2 million saved for classical civil society organisations. The help of the population is especially important to smaller organisations.

Financing

The total income of the sector amounted to around HUF 1.5 trillion in 2014. While 43% of classical civil society organisations operated with less than 500,000 HUF (approx. 1600 EUR) per year, interest representation groups and other non-profit organisations had generally more money at their disposal.
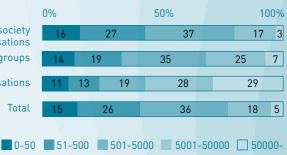
Figure 23. The distribution of non-profit organisations by the amount of income, 2014 (in thousand HUF)

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)

In terms of their share of the total revenue of the sector, classical civil society organisations are under-represented: 87% of civil society organisations could use 38% of total sector income in 2014 (associations received 22% of the total income, while foundations had 16% at their disposal). While other non-profit organisations received relatively more money from the state, classical civil society organisations' income depended more on private sources. The state budget puts about 4.5 times more money into the civil sector than local governments. In the case of classical civil society organisations, this was value 5.3. In the classical sub-sector, the contribution of membership fees to the budget also had a more significant weight in terms of income.

33 The number, distribution and total revenue of nonprofit organisations (2015), available at: www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_qpg003.html

34 The number, distribution and total revenue of nonprofit organisations by type of settlement (2015), available at: www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_qpg003.html

Part of the Hungarian NGO funding system, also found in the Polish funding system, is the 1% mechanism, which allows Hungarian individual taxpayers to designate 1% of their income tax to a qualifying non-profit organisation (associations, foundations and public foundations, e.g., NGOs conducting public benefit activities or state institutions like museums, libraries or the National Opera). Another 1% might be designated to either an officially registered church, or an issue of national significance, as named by Parliament – e.g. flood relief or emergency medical services. Usually around 30% of taxpayers use the opportunity to designate 1% to at least one beneficiary, mostly to NGOs and not to public institutions (About Miracles).

The decline in the amount of income received from state sources continued in 2014. Less than one-third (29%) of the total revenues of the sector originated from state or local government budgets, which is 6 points less than it had been a year before; 31% of the total revenue of classical civil society organisations came from state sources, while private donations were responsible for 35% of their income.

Figure 24. Financial indicators of classical civil society organisations' weight within the sector, 2014

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)

Figure 25. The distribution of the income of civil society organisations by sources, 2014

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)

Legal framework

According to the sustainability report of civil society organisations (Hungary 2015), the situation of Hungarian CSOs has worsened significantly since the change of government in 2010. The legal environment degraded the most, but there are other detrimental areas which have changed for the worse compared to previous periods:

→   the financial situation of civil society organisations;

→   their ability to assert their interests;

→   the state of the infrastructure servicing the sector;

→   public opinion of the organisations;

→   so-called organisational capacity dimension measuring the state of the supporter base of CSOs;

→   strategic planning;

→   internal control.

Only one negative change, the deterioration of services provided by civil society organisations, fits the pre-2010 pattern, although the downgrade here is also more pronounced since that year.

Political environment: The illiberal state

The Hungarian Prime-Minister Viktor Orbán began to transform the whole Hungarian public law system right after he gained power in 2010. He created a state structure dominated by the government, and one in which the head of government has unlimited influence because of centralisation of power and informal relationships based on personal dependence. The results of this process are the domestication or weakening of independent institutions, which are traditionally part of the system of checks and balances and have a key role in upholding the rule of law through the separation of powers.

In a speech in the summer of 2014, Orbán called his own system an "illiberal democracy" (Orban 2014a), which guarantees a few political rights but is not built on them. Orbán stated in December 2014 that in European political systems, where parliaments yield all the power, there is no need for checks and balances. Instead, it is more correct to speak about "cooperation" between state institutions (Orban 2014b). In a system where the task of institutions is not to check the government but to help it achieve its goals, civil society organisations' watchdog activities and efforts to hold the government accountable for its actions constitute a potential threat.

Main elements of the government's treatment of CSOs

→   Administrative and legal burdens imposed on civil society organisations;

→   Discrediting CSOs critical of the government and turn them into an enemy in the eye of the public;

→   Intimidation of CSOs critical of the government and encouraging self-censorship;

→   Cutting domestic and foreign funding of CSOs critical of the government;

→   Creating a network of pseudo/governmental CSOs that defend the government's policies and official position.

The deterioration of the legal environment

After the change in government in 2010, the administration changed the legal environment regarding civil society organisations significantly in the context of completely overhauling the public law system. The stated aim was to design a uniform, codex-like law regulating all aspects of the sector. Although the legislation promulgated in December 2011 (2011 Law CLXXV on the freedom of association, the legal status of public benefit purpose entities and the operation and support of civil society organisations) has brought about numerous positive developments[35], it contained two dubious elements: it transformed the financing system completely and rewrote the definition of "public benefit". According to the law, public benefit means an action "worthy of support, beneficial to the state and the government". Besides this, the legislation ties the public benefit status to numerous financial requirements that have no bearing on the publicly beneficial manner of the activity.

Furthermore, the newly amended Civil Code contains elements affecting the work and in some cases the existence of CSOs in Hungary. It requires civil society organisations to adapt their statues to the provisions of the new Civil Code by 15 March 2017.[36] The Code introduced many technical changes (e.g.: the extension of a board's liability after an organisation's dissolution) which raised concerns.

The online registration system, which enables the adoption of statutes to the new provisions, started to function in 2015. Public benefit NGOs are obliged to use this system, whereas this is optional for other types of NGOs. The online platform, based on experience, is not user-friendly, and further complicates the registration process. Once an organisation completes the form it takes months for the court to approve the registration. Court decisions vary a lot across the country as different judges interpret the legal requirements differently because there is no central legal position on it. This might result in dissolution of many civil society organisations, since most of the small organisations struggle with the adaption process, have no external assistance, can miss the deadline and therefore are likely to be dissolved by judicial bodies.

Both of these legal changes impose significant interpretational and adoption challenges to the organisations and legal professionals too. All in all, the legal environment does not foster the establishment of new CSOs, which might be one reason why some newly funded initiatives work on an informal basis and do not seek registration.

Transforming the financing system

The most problematic aspect of the new legal environment proved to be the transformation of the financing system. The National Cooperation Fund (NEA), which was established to finance the general operational activities of CSOs, is under the influence of the governing majority. The members of NEA's decision-making body, appointed by the government, are in the majority; the presidents of the bodies making decisions and controlling the Fund are appointed by the minister and 10% of the Fund resources are allocated by the minister in his own scope of authority. The law does not set a minimum amount for the state support of CSOs, therefore the sums have declined significantly since 2010.

The official goal of supporting civil society organisations has changed as well. Before 2010, the goal was to strengthen civil society and the encouragement of CSOs to take on an active role in society, whereas the NEA, beside its professional activity, offers support to civil society self-organisations for the "strengthening of national togetherness" and wants to "help them taking on a role in the expansion of public benefits" (Arato, Mikecz 2015: 319).

Participation in social dialogue and legislation

Even though in practice social dialogue was conducted only partially under previous governments – as civil society groups could not be a part of formulating alternatives since they were only allowed to give an opinion on finished legislative proposals and experts' opinions – the opportunities of CSOs to take part in such dialogue have generally become even scarcer since 2010. The Orbán government prefers to use private members' legislative motions, which are exempt from the legal requirement for consultation. The law defines wide-reaching and general exemptions from the requirement to conduct social dialogue and gather opinions during law-making processes, which are easily abused by the government. The process of giving opinion on legislative proposals often seems to be nothing more than a formality. There were occasions when the legislative proposal was presented to the Parliament before the deadline for presenting an opinion expired, and many times opinions presented are simply ignored and disappear without a trace (Kolonc 2013). According to the opinions of leaders of civil society organisations, professional cooperation with high-ranking officials of state institutions has become almost impossible because differing opinions are depicted by the government as political differences, and in most areas, the decisions are based on political considerations. Nevertheless, CSOs are still able to contact lower-level state representatives.

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35   For instance, the expansion of processes regarding bankruptcy and liquidation to civil society organisations, introduction of the term 'civil association', creation of certified public records.

36   According to 11. § (3) in Act CLXXVII. of 2013 on the coming into force of the Civic Code, after 15 March 2017 civil organisation may only operate based on the Founding Article based on the rules laid down by the Code and in accordance with the rules laid down by the Code.

Government-organised NGOs (GONGOs)

Since 2010, the government has constructed a network of pseudo-civil society organisations, which is involved in the organisation of local communities, conducting national activist-type work, and "professional" activities; standing beside the government and against those who criticise it. One of the central figures of the system is the president of the National Cooperation Fund, and founder of and one of the spokespersons for Civil Alliance Forum (CÖF) at the same time. CÖF practically operates as an outsourced division of the ruling party Fidesz, and lacks a transparent financial background. Since 2010, CÖF has organised a number of pro-government protests, the so-called Peace Marches (Békemenet), and communication campaigns consisting of billboards, TV and newspaper ads to discredit opposition parties and politicians during election campaigns. In addition to this, CÖF constantly proposes legislation restricting CSOs dealing with human rights.

Important members of the network of pseudo-civil society organisations are advocacy-type GONGOs, whose activities and topics of choice resemble NGOs involved in fighting corruption and protecting human rights, however, they are obviously tied to the cabinet. These organisations are created to counterbalance government-critical voices; their aim is to defend the steps taken by the government with their seemingly professional and independent comments, substantiate Fidesz's claims, and react to statements critical of the government.

Attacks against CSOs: discrediting, intimidating, cutting funding[37]

Because of the lack of a strong political opposition, the critical voice of CSOs is often more damaging for the government than that of opposition parties. Therefore, the government applies two approaches towards criticism coming from CSOs: they either neglect it or they put civil society organisations criticising government policies into the party-political field, and present them as an actor within the leftist opposition, diverting the dispute from the professional to the political sphere. Moreover, in order to discredit and threaten CSOs, the government has launched several attacks including legal and administrative measures, criminal investigations and media campaigns against civil society organisations since 2013[38].

The main targets of the attacks have been organisations coordinating the NGO Programme of the EEA/Norway Grants, together with those receiving funding from the programme, and those financed by Open Society Foundations founded by US-Hungarian philanthropist George Soros. The crackdowns typically focus on four main aspects: smear campaigns, intimidation, hindering the work of organisations and targeting political watchdogs.

37 A detailed summary of the attacks against NGOs by the government can be found here: Timeline of Governmental Attacks Against Hungarian NGO Sphere, 12.08.2015: http://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Timeline_of_gov_attacks_against_HU_NGOs_12082015.pdf

38 In 2013, media loyal to the government published reports on the alleged links of NGOs critical towards the government to opposition parties, and published a list of 11 NGOs that received support from Open Society Foundations, and 13 organisations that were supported by the NGO Programme of the EEA/Norway Grants. The allegations of the newspapers were echoed by the governing party Fidesz. According to their spokesperson, "these organisations kept for millions of dollars, what these organisations do, all they have to do in exchange of the American money, is to attack the Hungarian government, attack Fidesz, and attack the Prime Minister of Hungary in all possible forums."

The effects and lessons of the government's attacks

The campaign against civil society organisations did not manage to reach its goal of intimidating CSOs. Despite all this, they did not retreat, stood up for each other, and confronted the government's rhetoric. According to leaders of civil society organisations, the attacks actually strengthened CSOs, their cooperation and their commitment to their values and goals, joint thinking and developing cooperation between CSOs commenced.

Many organisations rethought the way they work, and the professional and advocacy functions they had had previously were expanded to include a more active role and forceful communications to build a supporter base. Organisations have become more active in their communications, focus more on public actions instead of traditional advocacy, and shift their focus on the organisation of communities in order to encourage people at the local level to take public matters into their own hands. New approaches have been launched to inform the public about their activities (e.g. festivals, blog, creating an umbrella organisation).

At the same time, the "good NGOs" vs. "bad NGOs" division applied by the government had a much greater effect on small, local organisations, for which the "bad" civil society organisation" stigma is much more dangerous because of their dependence on the local governments. These CSOs have become more careful and try to stay away from "politics" in order not to worsen their relationship with the local government.

One of the main lessons of the anti-CSO campaign is that there are ways to render the functioning of civil society organisations impossible temporarily through the constant harassment and inspections by authorities without drawing too much attention. Therefore, despite ideas of the government to tighten the regulation of the operation of the sector, there is actually no need for additional legislation since the government is able to render the operation of civil society organisations impossible using the currently existing administrative tools.

Data

In the case of Hungary, the online survey was answered by 144 civil society organisations and on 10 interviews conducted with the CSO representatives. 50% of the responding organisations operate in the area of youth and education, and a large share of them (42%) put the organisation in the other category, while the third place is taken by organisations dealing with social care (31%). A similar share of civil society organisations operated in the areas of human rights (24%), environment protection (20%), history and culture (24%) and sports, free time, hobbies (24%).

The responding organisations are generally active nationally, but many of them operate at the regional or countryside community levels as well. There are few respondents who are active only in the capital city or larger cities, and it is uncommon to find civil society organisations that are active internationally (32 of 144 organisations). Almost half (47%) of the responding organisations have between 10 and 50 employees, volunteers and members, 13% have 50-100 employees, volunteers and members, while 8% have 100-200, and 6% have over 200. Most of the organisations (33%) have been active for 10-20 years, 28.5% for

more than 20 years, 21.5% for 6-10 years, 15% for 1-5 years, and 1% for less than a year. 96.5% of those filling in the questionnaire were registered organisations, and there were only two non-registered organisations/grassroots movements.

The organisations are very diverse in terms of their yearly budget: most of the organisations (45) have HUF 1-5 million available to them every year, 31 of them have less than 1 million, 21 have between 10 and 30 million, 16 have between 5-10 million, 14 organisations have yearly budgets larger than HUF 100 million, while 11 organisations have between HUF 30 and 100 million a year. In total, 72 organisations (54% of respondents) have less than HUF 5 million to spend every year. Organisations (17%) of respondents with larger budgets (30-100 million or over) generally operate nationally or in larger cities, and many of them have been active for 10-20 years. Among the organisations participating in the study, there are only five that have such a large budget and have been in existence for only 1-5 years. These organisations, in general, do not operate locally/regionally but in larger cities and at the national or international levels and they deal with media policy, corruption or human rights.

In general, although the statements do not apply to the entire civil sector in Hungary and only to the organisations taking part in the study, the research did lead to useful results, which are in line with other studies on the state of civil society (Hungary 2015).

Challenges for CSOs in Hungary

In general, as result of the survey, 40% of CSOs participating in the survey evaluate that their situation worsened in the past three years (58 organisations), 35% felt better (51 organisations), while 24% stated that their situation had not become any better or worse (35 organisations). The main challenges, as mentioned by the CSOs, can be grouped into political, financial, administrative, legal, operative and organisational challenges, etc.

Political challenges

Based on the answers concerning the main challenges facing civil society organisations, CSOs see the political environment as a serious challenge. The government's crackdowns on civil society have made it tougher for civil society organisations to operate in several ways:

→   It redirects their already stretched capacities from professional tasks;

→   It puts pressure on the employees of civil society organisations;

→   It forces self-censorship onto some of the organisations to avoid being restricted from potentially receiving state funding, and to avoid "having to swim upstream" when they work;

→   It significantly erodes trust in civil society (this materialises in comments on online that abuse and incite hatred against them);

→   It makes it impossible for civil society organisations to assert their interests;

→   It puts at a crossroads those organisations that traditionally do not try to advocate for and articulate their interests but are being stigmatised anyway because of the source of their funding.

The most frequently mentioned problem was the impossibility of advocacy and participation in decision-making, which in the case of many civil society organisations is one of their main areas of activity. The experience of one national environmental CSO is that state actors do not even answer their letters any more, do not welcome their representatives, and that they cannot participate in the work of opinion-giving bodies, of which they were previously members (Interview H1). Another national CSO working in the sphere of human rights pointed out in the questionnaire that "the chance for meaningful consultation has disappeared almost completely between state institutions, especially ministries, and some of the civil society organisations, which are independent and try to advocate for their interests." (Answer to an open question) Several CSOs, as described by an anti-corruption organisation, decided not to cooperate with state institutions to avoid damaging their professional reputation, which also carries some risk factors:

"Advocacy, negotiating with government bodies, participating in consultations and contributions could easily lead to the government legitimising certain acts by referring to us, using our professional reputation as a basis. This leads to accusations of collaboration. However, by boycotting the government we could navigate ourselves into a vacuum." (Answer to an open question)

During the interviews, it came up several times that civil society organisations had not been able to achieve a political and professional breakthrough in the past few years. They have tried to influence events externally, without the government giving meaningful consideration to their results. A CSO working in the sphere of civil society development believes that one of the main reasons for this is bad communication, and that organisations often pay too much attention to their own credibility (Interview H4). For this reason, they do not enter the space of the elite in power, even though they could be more successful by adapting themselves in this way, because in the eyes of some people, and even themselves, they would lose their credibility.

Several organisations say that it is not only the government's attitude that makes it harder for them to operate, but also that cooperation with local governments is tough at that level. The opinion of a CSO working on the local level represents the views of several respondents:

"We had to face the fact that the local government hinders our work at any possible level, and that most people do not stand with us against the local government. As an effect of this, our supporter base decreased in size, and our strength and our self-confidence declined as well." (answer to an open question)

The government's communication and the shallow negotiations for self-legitimisation have had a rather destructive effect on civil society organisations in the long-term. Based on the answers, many organisations find it tough to stay true to their self-identity and be able to achieve their professional goals at the same time, advocate for the interests of groups they

represent and have an effect on public policies. The frustration resulting from this tough situation was described by a national CSO working in the sphere of disability advocacy:

> "Learned helplessness – after a lot of fights civil society "learns" that it is impossible to change something. It does not mean that we want quick results. The problem is that state bodies do not communicate with us, or if they do, they do not take what we say into account." (answer to an open question)

Besides that, it is important to pay attention to another effect mentioned by respondents, which is one of the results of the government's anti-civil society policies. The constant hostile communication, crackdowns and inspections, and the biased and non-transparent distribution of state funding forced many respondents to be less vocal about what they do and to soften their criticism of the government's measures.

One of the interviewees said she was approached directly by phone by a minister, who told her that the organisation would stand a higher chance of receiving state funding if she was more selective of media outlets to which she gives interviews and in what she says. Although the organisation's leader was not intimidated, after considering the interests of her colleagues, she decided to stop openly and constantly criticising certain measures of the government. In line with this example, several organisations indicated that they had to re-think what and how they criticise to be able to operate without distraction.

Financial challenges

Around 88% of organisations who filled in the survey faced financial difficulties, for which there are numerous reasons.

Because foreign donors present in the country are decreasing in numbers,[39] there is constant competition for available resources. This often hinders effective cooperation between civil society organisations. The low amount of opportunities to participate in competitions is especially tough for smaller organisations, who cannot participate in EU tenders due to their inability to pay their own contributions of 20-40% as required by the EU rules.

Figure 26. How do you rate the context condition for your CSO with regards to finances?

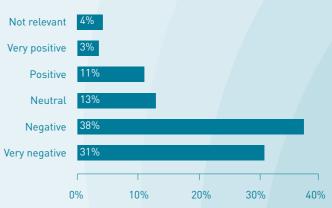|	
Not relevant	1%
Very positive	4%
Positive	15%
Neutral	15%
Negative	42%
Very negative	22%

39   The latest funding cycle of the NGO Fund of the EEA/Norway Grants ended in 2016, and Open Society Institute is also trying to decrease its financial support to encourage organisations to become self-sufficient.

Another factor connected to finance is that most organisations operate on a project-by-project basis, which means they cannot ensure that their employees get regular wages. They often get in a situation where they are close to folding because of the lack of resources. Even when they are successful on a tender, there could be financial difficulties because most projects do not allow for the organisations' operating costs. Thus, in many cases maintaining the offices creates a problem. The project-by-project based operation also seriously hinders organisations in terms of long-term planning and operating along their own guidelines and strategies instead of adapting their activities to the needs of the current tender applications.

The biased, often corrupt and non-transparent distribution of state funding forced many organisations to re-evaluate their ideological orientation, according to the answers. More and more organisations decided to introduce self-censorship and be less critical to ensure they receive financial support[40].

Figure 27. How do you rate the context conditions for your CSO with regards to state funding?

Not relevant	4%
Very positive	3%
Positive	11%
Neutral	13%
Negative	38%
Very negative	31%

The large majority of respondents believe that a larger share of funds distributed by the state, which include EU financial support as well, is given to civil society organisations loyal to the government. Tasks traditionally undertaken by civil society organisations are often performed by background institutions of the state or "pseudo-civil society organisations". The decrease in state financial support hit organisations performing social care-related tasks especially hard because tenders to undertake such tasks are generally won by large religious organisations. Similarly, the situation of organisations dealing with education also deteriorated. Because of the centralisation of the educational system and the nationalisation of schools, it is getting harder and harder to cooperate with schools, and organisations are being forced out of performing their duties. A national CSO working in the sphere of education and social deprivation, which is involved in nurturing talent, facilitating integration and create equal chances for all in disadvantaged villages, had this to say about the situation:

40   A recent example demonstrates this tendency very well. In September 2016, a decision was published on the distribution of EU funding for the after-school educational programme "Tanoda" which helps disadvantaged children. Numerous NGOs that have successfully operated after-school programmes for years and had substantial experience in this regard, were rejected, while the majority of the new grant recipients had not previously implemented after-school programmes for disadvantaged students. Since the decision was made by the ministry in a non-transparent way, some of those who have not received grants assume that they were rejected because of their openly critical stance towards the government's education, Roma and childcare policies (Hungary defunds successful after-school study programmes, The Budapest Beacon, 26 September 2016, available at:http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungary-defunds-successful-after-school-study-programs/39789).

"We cannot position ourselves within the state system, as we are operating in an area where even the fact of our existence bothers the decision-makers. Dealing with extreme poverty and Roma integration we infiltrated an area where the state has failed. While they are communicating that they are successful in these areas, we show their mistakes. All this influences funding and chances to participate in tenders." (Interview H7)
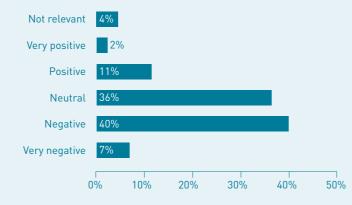
Administrative, legal, operative and organisational challenges

Based on the responses, the greatest administrative challenge is the constant alteration of the legal environment, which is a serious hindrance to the organisations' daily operations, increasing administrational burdens both financially and in terms of time spent on performing such tasks. Between 2012 and 2015, regulations on the operation of civil society organisations changed often, forcing organisations to spend money and energy on complying with those new rules.

According to a national CSO working in the sphere of civil society development, due to the new civil society law[41] and the paragraphs affecting civil society organisations in the new Civic Code,[42] "organisations will cease to operate in large numbers, since they did not follow the new rules" (Interview H4). Another CSO working in the sphere of civil society development on the local level believes that although the intention of legislators mirrored in the legal changes are positive (e.g. they try to filter out phantom civil society organisations more effectively), the regulations place a large burden on smaller civil society organisations (Interview H8).

A further administration cost for many civil society organisations is compiling documentation for tenders and performing general bureaucratic tasks, for which civil society organisations often do not have the capabilities.

Figure 28. How do you rate the context conditions for your CSO with regards to the legal framework of the country?

Not relevant	4%
Very positive	2%
Positive	11%
Neutral	36%
Negative	40%
Very negative	7%

41   Act CLXXV. of 2011 on the freedom of association, the legal status of public benefit purpose entities, and the operation and support of civil organisations.

42   According to 11. § (3) in Act CLXXVII. of 2013 on the coming into force of the Civic Code, after 15 March 2017 civil organisation may only operate based on the Founding Article based on the rules laid down by the Code and in accordance with the rules laid down by the Code.

Several civil society organisations face a lack of human resources. The explanations for this are that highly skilled individuals usually take better paying main jobs or leave the country. The number of volunteers is not enough and it is hard to build an organisation based on volunteering. Even if organisations manage to employ a quality workforce, they cannot provide them with long-term career perspectives because their project-by-project based operation means they can only plan for 1-2 years.

As a consequence of challenges brought about by structural and resource-related problems, many organisations start to lose their original focus. Instead of looking for resources available for their original goals, organisations adapt their strategies to available resources to be able to stay above ground.

Societal challenges

Smear campaigns started by the government that reach a wide layer of society cause problems for several civil society organisations. A CSO working in the sphere of minority advocacy highlighted that as a result of the campaigns more and more foreign donors leave the country, and trust in civil society, which was already not high, eroded.

Many organisations indicated in their answers that the lack of constituency in the society of civil society organisations is notable; presumably a lot of people think these organisations are pointless. According to several answers, most of Hungarian society does not even understand the point of civil society organisations and why their work is useful. This phenomenon is not the result of the smear campaigns of the government, but the "decade-long debt" of the civil sphere. The organisations have not paid enough attention to educating society on their work and building up a supporter base.

A national CSO working in the sphere of disability advocacy stated that "being a member of civil society is not an example to be followed in Hungary as of now. Those who are not educated agree that it is pointless, dangerous and stupid to start civil society organisations" (Interview 6). A national CSO working in the sphere of human rights, youth and education answered that it was a huge problem that "the point of the existence of civil society is questioned, the civil society serves as public enemy number one" (answer to an open question). Due to the smear campaigns, a strong trust deficit has been established towards civil society, which often hiders its operation.
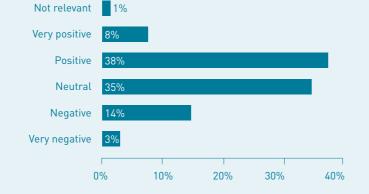
It is a general trait, and not necessarily the result of the anti-civil society policies of the government, that Hungarian society tends to be more passive and apathetic. Organisations that deal with politics defined it as a challenge that they are rejected and stigmatised. A national educational CSO said the following:

"Our organisation specifically deals with political activities, from which many people keep their distance. For this reason, it happened that we could not hold one of our trainings in a daytime warming room as it had political content and the head of the institution would not allow it. We faced similar issues with our publications in social institutions and civilian centres. Against these

A factor closely related to this problem is that society is becoming increasingly indifferent to questions of public policy and society, meaning that they also care less about the work done by civil society organisations. Parallel to processes ongoing in Europe, respondents also feel that radicalisation is getting more extreme, which leads to new burdens for organisations dealing with vulnerable groups. Civil society organisations often face a challenge when cooperating with rural communities, where they do not have an active supporter base, and where far-right organisations are also more visible.

Connecting with citizens and letting them know what the organisation is about, according to most respondents, is facilitated the most by intense, sometimes provocative communication in social, online and offline media. Several organisations believe that a highly visible presence online is the key to getting closer to their target groups and the wider public.

Figure 29. How do you rate the context conditions for your CSO with regards to changes in public opinion?

Not relevant — 1%
Very positive — 8%
Positive — 38%
Neutral — 35%
Negative — 14%
Very negative — 3%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%

Although most of the respondents evaluated the attention the media paid to them rather positively, many commented negatively on the media as a platform helping them to become more visible. Several organisations' experiences show that the media does not help civil society organisations, as it does not write about their activities because their results do not reach the threshold of the media or only do so after a lot of effort. All this prevents the popularity of the organisations from increasing. The contradiction was explained by a national CSO, who stated that in the past three years there had been a strong media focus on corruption cases around which not only politicians but also (pseudo-) civil society organisations appeared. The organisation believes that as a result of these scandals there was a rise of interest in the work of some CSOs (Interview H10).

Figure 30. How do you rate the context conditions for your CSO with regards to media attention?

Not relevant — 1%
Very positive — 8%
Positive — 36%
Neutral — 34%
Negative — 18%
Very negative — 3%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%

Challenges to identity and cooperation

The majority of organisations indicated in their answers that the lack of coordination and cooperation was a serious problem for civil society organisations. Both in interviews and open answers organisations indicated that they would be open to cooperation and they could imagine two solutions:

→   It would be organised on a professional basis;

→   It would be organised along more general lines, issues affecting the whole Hungarian population. A good example of this is that several civil society organisations acted together and explained their opinion regarding the referendum on 2 October 2016 on the EU refugee relocation scheme (Interview H4).

Cooperation is hindered by organisations' lack of capacity to organise negotiations and start joint campaigns. Many interviewees said it would be a great help if there was a third, "outside" party that would deal specifically with encouraging cooperation, building a platform and coordinating efforts. Another potential solution could be to create financial support schemes that would be available only if several organisations executed a project in cooperation. A national CSO working in the sphere of education and social deprivation stated during the interview that the divergence of organisations also makes it harder to build platforms and cooperate, and that there are differences between organisations that genuinely consider the case to be important to them and those that only want to join a cooperation to keep their heads above water (Interview H7).

There have been many answers on the self-identification and self-image of organisations. It is a notable challenge for civil society organisations that the government often describes them as the opposition, as a political actor. Several organisations, as a result of their activities, perform public life/politics-related tasks (e.g. asserting their interests, lobbying, campaigning), however, this is not equal to party politics. Nevertheless, as a CSO wrote in its answer, "the quasi-opposition role forced onto civil society, the positioning of CSOs as political actors" is another addition to the erosion of public opinion on civil society organisations.

Another challenge, as a national CSO working in the sphere of education mentioned, is "the organisations like to chase money available via tenders, due to which they lose focus (they do not do what they believe would be important, but what there is money available for)" (answer to an open question). Besides that, their operation is also hindered by the increasing number of quasi-NGOs and Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisations (GONGOs), who on the one hand discredit their work and on the other have a practically unmatchable advantage when they participate in state tenders. One of the interviewees said that dualism was an important trait of civil society, meaning that there are GONGOs that are dressed up like civil society organisations, work like governmental think-tanks, serving the interests of the government and openly legitimising the government's measures. On the other hand, there are organisations critical towards the government, wanting to oversee it and whose work is firmly based on democratic values and human rights.[43]

43 The third group, in terms of size probably the largest one, includes those organisations that do not deal with any politics-related topics and try to avoid stating their opinion on the issue, and which try to keep their distance from this contradiction and avoid confrontation with the government.

All in all, several organisations had to decide if they wanted to adapt to the current political and legal wishes, which would grant them more resources and ensure their heads stay above water, although they could lose their self-identity as a result, or if they would continue working for their original goals while swimming upstream. The answer is obvious for organisations who traditionally deal with the oversight of state institution and work against inequality in society.

In the case of organisations providing social care, the question of where they belong and what their goal is leads to serious dilemmas. A national CSO working in the sphere of civil society development referred to this challenge as an identity crisis, which summarises the current internal challenges of Hungarian civil society:

> "Identity crisis and clarifying relationships: We had to solve the identity crisis that was brought about by the decade-long operation which mostly received no reflection and by the fact that organisations, whether they wanted to or not, found themselves in the political space from time-to-time, sometimes they even got into the political party scene. Who are we, who do we serve? What is the role of civil society organisations, the civil sphere in the life of a society? Is the mission we want to accomplish still relevant? Are we still true to ourselves? How is our relationship with the world around us, specifically to other civil society organisations (cooperation, competition), how do we relate to local or central decision-makers' vision of society and to groups for whom we work for, who we provide services to or represent?" (Interview H4).

According to this respondent, there might be a large group of organisations that do not know who their target group is, and are unclear on whom they represent: a cause, governmental policy or maybe people. He says one must differentiate between civil society organisations, because only around half of registered organisations may be considered active, the other half are in an identity crisis. The group, which is less active and does not necessarily have a sense of working for a certain cause, is easily influenced by who can provide funding for them as it is unclear who legitimises their work: those who pay them or those who receive their services and whose interests they represent (Interview H4).

Best practices: How CSOs respond to challenges

The answers given to the questionnaire and interviews described several general practices followed and practised by many civil society organisations. In the following section, we introduce those methods and approaches that a number of organisations use and consider as successful.

A number of answers refer to how cooperation within the civil society sector and between other sectors is becoming more important for organisations. Sectoral cooperation increased especially after the government's smear campaign, when organisations started intense cooperation to be able to be more unified in stepping up to solve the societal problems they fight against. Such an initiative was MACI (Hungarian Civil Society Organisations) and the less visible CÖLÖP cooperation and coordination platform. MACI is a brand symbolising the community of Hungarian civil society organisations, which was established to introduce what civil society organisations do, why their activities are important and to make civil society more popular in the eyes of citizens. CÖLÖP is a platform for organisations, based mainly in Budapest, dealing with public policy and legal advocacy.

These groups were inspired by the government's crackdown on organisations funded by the NGO Fund of the EEA/Norway Grants, thus it might be viewed as the positive result of the government's actions. However, CÖLÖP ceased operating because of a lack of resources and organisational capacities. The experiences of this group confirms what many interviewees said, namely that platforms which facilitated unified action and encourage cooperation by limiting competition would be useful. Respondents said that this could be done only by a third party dealing only with coordinating cooperation.

Inter-sectoral cooperation is mostly present at the local level, according to answers and interviews, where several successful examples are available. There are several civil society organisations, mostly involved in social activities, which managed to form a good relationship with local governments. They stated that before they managed to achieve this result they had had to do a lot of work in preparation and build trust between the two sides, which mainly involved making the leaders of the settlement understand that they did not want to compete with the local government, but to help it.

In their answers and in the interviews, organisations did not report on any inter-sectoral cooperation at higher, regional or national levels. A national CSO working in the sphere of education and social deprivation learning from constant let-downs, realised that it could not advocate the interests represented by its organisation at the ministerial level, so changed strategy and moved these efforts to the local level. As its representative said, they cannot do anything against systemic breaches of basic rights, but local officials can also fight injustice. In the village where they operate, they managed to achieve results, namely, when someone goes to the doctor or to do official business, he or she is being treated fairly and is not discriminated against because they are Roma. A lot of hard work had to be done before this, it took a lot of effort to prevent local officials from abusing their power (Interview H7).

The answers revealed that it is important to cooperate and be active at local levels also because the events of the past three years showed that citizens know very little about civil society organisations, they are not familiar with their work, thus they do not show solidarity with the organisations when they are attacked. Therefore, organisations that recognise they should be active in building a civil society community outside of Budapest are

important. In this way, smaller settlements will also enjoy the results they achieve and understand why they are useful[44]. A human rights CSO said that the unfeasibility of advocacy at the governmental level led to an increased emphasis on communicating with citizens.

> "The new strategy of our organisation is to turn more and more towards citizens because we want to provide them with an image different from the one depicted by government's smear campaign and to let them know what our causes are. Not only because of this, but with this goal we organised a network of lawyers working outside of Budapest, to increase the number of our lawyers in the countryside and show citizens that basic rights are important in their lives too." (Interview H2)

This was supported by the interview with a representative of CSO working in the sphere of civil society development on the local level, who believes that the key is to familiarise citizens with the work of civil society (Interview H8). Another respondent revealed that this positive process had started already and citizens line up behind the visible initiatives of civil society. He believes that, sadly, the number of highly visible initiatives is small, a situation in which the media plays a big part (Interview H9). A number of respondents stated that despite the government's smear campaigns, trust in civil society is growing.

A CSO working in the sphere of civil society development considers it especially important to build horizontal partnerships when organisations start working in smaller settlements (Interview H4). The organisation tries to help the representatives of local vulnerable groups to be able to become the partners of elected decision-makers. With this, the organisation contributes to the groups' ability to articulate what their groups' interests are and to avoid that the advocacy for vulnerable groups' interests or regions be done solely by self-appointed civil society organisations.

For this, it is essential that the civil society organisations that can help with this be present locally. Regarding this, another CSO working in the sphere of community development said, and this was mentioned by other respondents as well, that it is important for

> "the process of gathering donations and distributing them not to be isolated like an ivory tower, but something close to the people, supporter and supported should get to know each other, they need to see what is created with the money." (Interview H6)

Several organisations considered the number of volunteers who work for them as a positive sign Answers given to the surveys also reveal that most organisations evaluate volunteering as positive or very positive with regards to the work done by volunteers. Respondents selected volunteering as the most positive side of their operation.

Figure 31. How do you rate the context conditions for your CSO with regards to the work of volunteers?

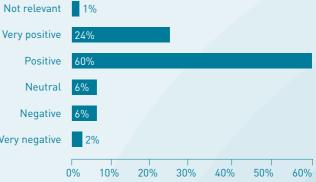|	
Not relevant	1%
Very positive	24%
Positive	60%
Neutral	6%
Negative	6%
Very negative	2%

In cases of some CSOs working in the sphere of community development, disadvantaged youth and education, one of the important factors of success was that they do not operate in Budapest but in the areas in question, where they build community and personal relationships with the locals (Interviews H7, H9). Such work is highly dependent on volunteering. In one case there is a waiting list for volunteer positions, and candidates are selected based on professional criteria (Interview H7). In another case there are also many volunteers helping the locals:
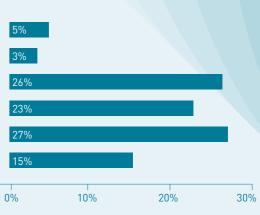
> "What could be done by 10 paid employees for us is done by about 55 volunteers. And another 100 have a role in our programmes every year and turn up at least once around Pere. Although it would be easier and of higher quality professionally if we had paid employees, this method is sustainable and increases social solidarity." (Interview H9)

Using volunteer work is in itself a way for organisations to become independent of the frames set by tenders and tight resources, but it is not a solution to the lack of financial resources. For this, organisations have to come up with difference solutions as well to be able to diversify their resources. More and more Hungarian civilian organisations employ new financing models. A CSO dealing with the collection of donations, distributing them and organising community-building programmes to strengthen local identity in a district of Budapest since December 2011 gets its independence this way. As a representative said, for a community foundation, it is both important and a challenge to become embedded in the local community and to form a supporter base. The organisation puts the collected money into funds and distributes it from these. With the support of the NGO Fund of the EAA/Norway Grants they have managed to start their programme in several settlements in the countryside as well (Interview H6).

Figure 32. How do you rate the context conditions for your CSO with regards to private donations?

Not relevant	5%
Very positive	3%
Positive	26%
Neutral	23%
Negative	27%
Very negative	15%

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44   According to KSH data, 56.5% of registered civil organisations work in Budapest and only 6.9% in smaller settlements (3.2.9. The number, distribution and total revenues of nonprofit organisations, by type of settlement (2005-), available at: www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_qpg003.html)

A CSO dealing with prevention of addictions, reduction of harms caused by addiction and treatment, increasingly bases its finances on gathering donations and community financing. During the interview, its leader emphasised that the government's 2014 anti-Norway Funds campaign created a pressing situation, which forced them to become self-sufficient instead of relying on state funding. Therefore, it has to find a new cooperation partner every 2-3 years because corporations are interested in an issue for only about that long. Civil society has only one way to deal with this: to adapt (answer to an open question).

A national CSO working in the sphere of civil society development also turned to alternative methods to collect financial resources: their donation stores generated significant income, which they began to organise based on the British model. They started enterprises and got involved in economic activities, which forms the basis of their work and their calling (Interview H10).

One of the most well-known organisations working through community financing is the investigative portal Átlátszó.hu (transparent.hu). A large part of the organisation's funding is from their circle of supporters:

> "We used public attention and anger generated by the smear campaigns to increase the number of our private donors, "subscribers". Another effect of the government's attack is that the number of regular small-donors in 2015 was double that of 2014." (Átlátszó.hu)

Several organisations indicated in their answers that as a result of the aforementioned challenges and the lack of resources they have changed their approach, and tried to extend their portfolio – meaning that they include marketable services in it, while they also continue to operate according to their goals. These organisations started to offer services through which they can contact market actors or state institutions. As a CSO working in the sphere of social and health care indicated in its answer:

> "To deal with the problem of lack of resources we work on cooperation agreements for companies and company-run foundations, and we offer our services connected to our activities and our goals as a product – thus we are trying to find solutions by mixing non-profit views with business considerations." (Interview H5)

All in all, interviewees believed the ideal situation would be if larger donors changed their strategy of supporting organisations that achieved the required results on a project-by-project basis. These organisations need long-term, multi-year strategic financial support, and the required results and tasks would be drawn up together by the donor and the grant recipient during a long period of preparations.

In conclusion, the questionnaires and the interviews suggest that the best practices of civil society organisation are mostly based on intra- and inter-sector cooperation, active communication and building supporter networks, creative financing solutions, effective use of volunteer work and the partnerships formed and their presence at the local level.

Conclusions

Since 2010, when Fidesz and its leader Viktor Orbán came to power, the Hungarian government has turned the civil sector into a political battleground and made civil society a key target of its rhetoric and policies. The government has rewritten the complete framework of the Hungarian public law system including regulations regarding the civil society. While the new law has brought about several positive changes, it has contained two dubious elements: it transformed the financing system completely and rewrote the definition of ´public benefit' (meaning beneficial to the state and *the government*). Moreover, the new laws have created administrative burdens for CSOs. The opportunities for CSOs to take part in decision-making processes have become much more scarce. Professional cooperation with state officials has become almost impossible.

Another problematic aspect of the new environment proved to be the transformation of the financing system, which was reduced, centralised and became ideological. Therefore, Hungarian CSOs evaluate the state support and legal framework quite negatively.

One important development in the civil society sector has been the construction of a network of pseudo-civil society organisations and/or government-organised NGOs (GONGOs). They are created to counterbalance government-critical voices and replace previously working independent CSOs.

Finally, smear campaign against CSOs critical of the government's policies were launched including legal and administrative measures, criminal investigations and communication campaigns against civil society organisation.

Despite these challenges, many CSOs said their situation had improved in the past three years. The hostile political environment also had positive effects besides the negative ones. It encouraged CSOs to cooperate and communicate more actively and to build relationships with society more directly, which led to creative solutions in finance and communication and helped bring about critical self-reflection.

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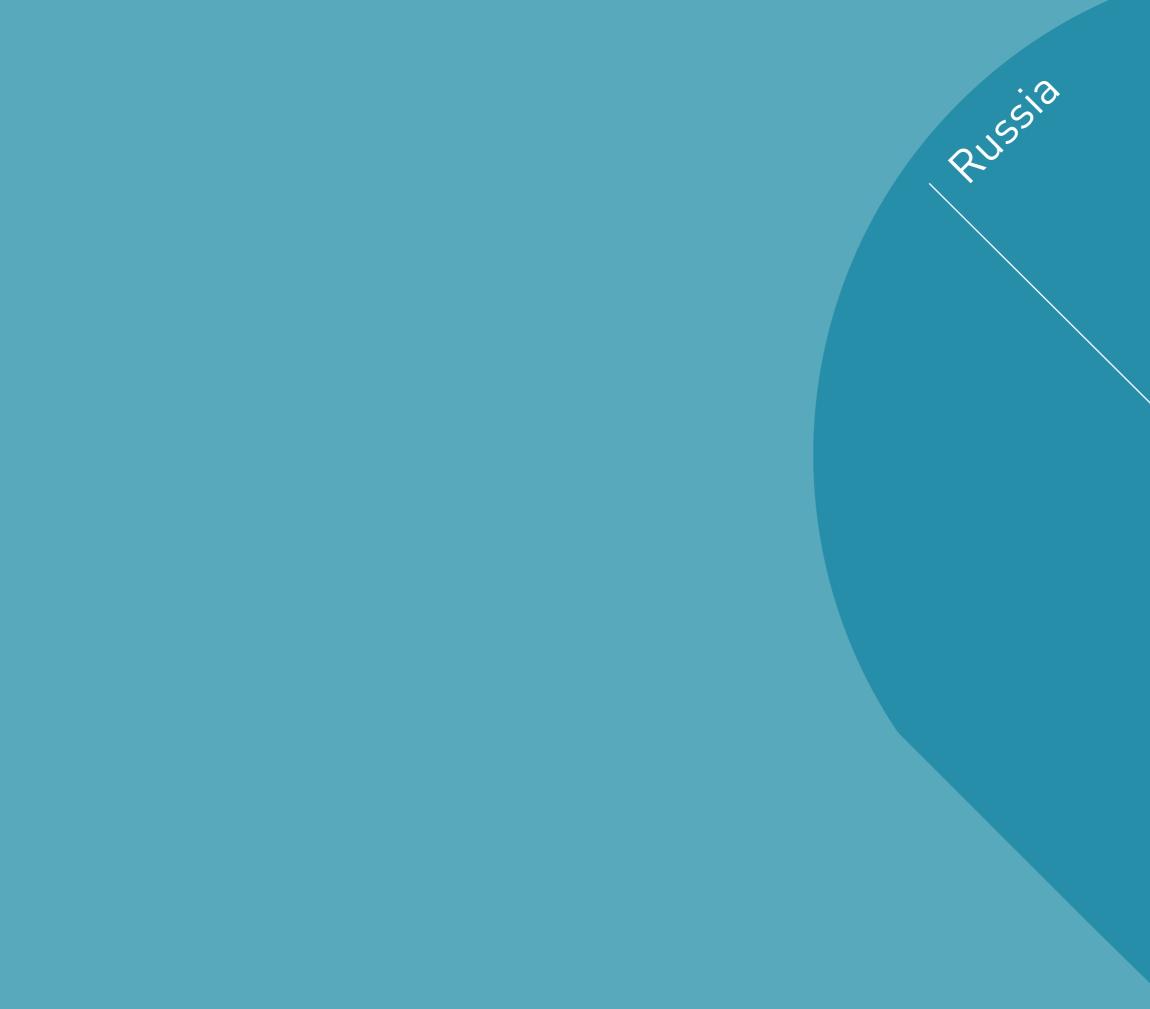Interview H6: local community development CSO
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Russia

Russia: Civil Society Sector Divided

By Yulia Skokova

Russia's civil society sector has a number of distinctive characteristics that set it apart from its counterparts in the EU countries. First, Russia's non-profits are relatively young. It was only after the break-up of the Soviet Union that people in Russia were finally able, for the first time in 70 years, to practise independent self-organisation. In 1995, Federal Law No. 7 on Non-profit Organisations was adopted to regulate NGOs, establish their charter types (organisational and legal forms) and address other legal aspects of their operation. Although heavily amended over the years, this law is still in effect. A few large network-based organisations established in Soviet times continue to operate in the new historical context: various veterans' councils, women's councils and disability societies make up a significant portion of the Russian non-profit sector today and add distinctive features to its overall profile (Ljubownikow et al., 2013).

Another specific aspect of Russia's case is that its civil society sector has faced a series of rapid and often fundamental changes in its environment over the 26 years of its existence. Thus, in the early stages before the 2000s, the government largely ignored the civil society. Living a separate, independent life, Russia's CSOs community raised finances from various sources, primarily from foreign foundations (Sundstrom 2006) and offered training workshops and educational programmes. NGO leaders worked hard to learn more about project design and management, fundraising, etc. However, the sector was in its infancy with only minimal civic participation and limited support from the general public, businesses and government.

In the early 2000s, the government began to shape its policies towards CSOs and broader civil society. As the first step in this direction, President Putin met with representatives of non-profits for the first time in 2001 (Nikitin & Buchanan 2002). A few years later in 2005, the federal Civic Chamber was established as the first institutional product of the new policy, followed by civic chambers in each constituent region of the Russian Federation. These civic chambers were designed to provide a sustained channel of communication between civil society and government (Stuvøy 2014, Richter 2009).

Evidence of the government's plans to take NGO activities under control first emerged in 2006 (Crotty et al., 2014). Legal restrictions on foreign funding of NGOs were imposed for the first time, inter alia to prevent "financing of illegal political activities from abroad". Changes in the law also tightened the registration procedures for NGOs, in particular foreign organisations, added grounds for denial of registration and introduced onerous reporting requirements.

From then on, the government's policy towards CSOs has been increasingly straightforward in seeking to construct a segment of non-profits which do not receive any funds from abroad and focus on social welfare rather than on human rights, advocacy or other potentially controversial areas (Daucé 2014, Salamon et al. 2015).

In the past five years, this trend has translated into new legislation designed to stimulate the former and restrain the latter types of non-profit activities. This new legislation includes, on one hand, the law on state support of socially oriented non-profit organisations, the law

allowing transfers from regional social welfare budgets to NGOs providing social services, and the law on public benefit organisations, and on the other hand, the laws on undesirable organisations and Foreign Agents. This policy has caused the country's non-profit sector to split into two distinct types of organisations: "socially oriented" and "Foreign Agents".

The third distinctive feature of the Russian non-profit sector has been a rapid and significant increase in its performance and impact, despite a decline in the number of registered NGOs. Regardless of the numerous legal restrictions summarised above, Russia's non-profit sector today is one of the prominent players in both the social sphere and public policy. Many Russian NGOs currently operate at the highest professional level and are very visible in society. Despite a number of persistent problems, such as low public trust, poor access to mass media, selective pressure from the government targeting certain organisations, and some others, the Russian non-profit sector has generally made significant progress over the relatively brief period of its existence. A few areas deserve a special mention, such as sustainable development of philanthropy, including both private and corporate giving, and the emerging informal citizen groups set up to address local community issues.

Russian civil society sector in numbers

A few key figures, such as the number of registered organisations, their per capita distribution, scope of activity, public involvement in non-profit organisations and other forms of social activism can be used to characterise the state of Russian civil society today.

According to the Russian Ministry of Justice, the number of registered non-profits stood at 227,000[45] as of October 2016.
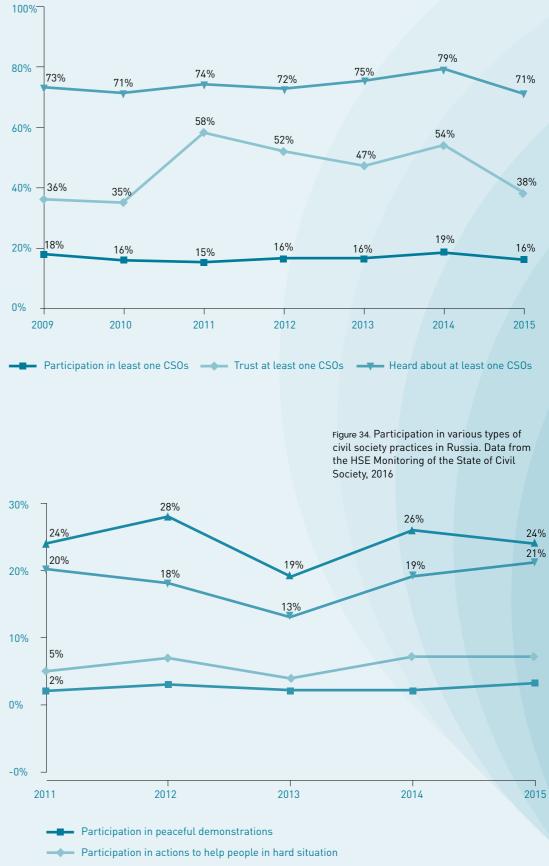
The numbers vary considerably across regions. A little more than a quarter (27%) of all Russian CSOs is concentrated in Moscow, the Moscow region (metropolitan area) and St. Petersburg. On average, there are just 1.5 NGOs per 1,000 Russians, but this number is significantly higher in sparsely populated regions, such as the Far East and the North Caucasus, and in regions with stronger non-profit sectors, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, and Moscow and Kaliningrad regions.

Most operating CSOs focus on social services, such as helping people with disabilities, trying to prevent child abandonment and working in orphanages. Human rights and environmental organisations have recently become an absolute minority.

> "The community of human rights organisations is a tiny community." (Interview R8)

Despite an obvious increase in absolute numbers over the past few years, public participation in NGO activities remains very low as a percentage of the total Russian population (see Figure 33). According to the HSE Monitoring of the State of Civil Society,[46] the proportion

45 Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. Data on registered non-profit organisations, available at: http://unro.minjust.ru/NKOs.aspx
46 Bulletin of information and analysis on the development of civil society and nonprofit sector in the Russian Federation HSE Centre for Studies of Civil Society and Nonprofit Sector. No 1 (9) 2016.
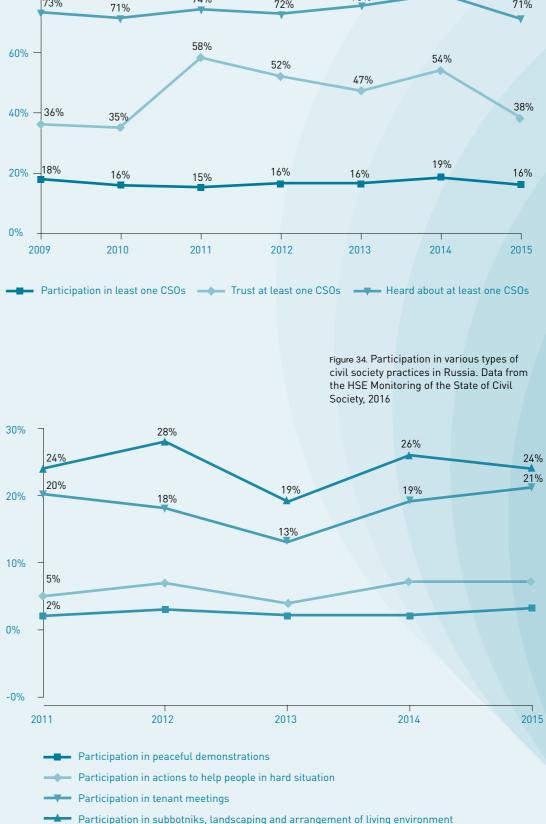

Figure 33. Awareness, trust and participation in NGO activities. Data from the HSE Monitoring of the State of Civil Society, 2016

- Participation in least one CSOs
- Trust at least one CSOs
- Heard about at least one CSOs

Figure 34. Participation in various types of civil society practices in Russia. Data from the HSE Monitoring of the State of Civil Society, 2016

- Participation in peaceful demonstrations
- Participation in actions to help people in hard situation
- Participation in tenant meetings
- Participation in subbotniks, landscaping and arrangement of living environment

of Russians participating in at least one NGO varied from 19% to 16% between 2009 and 2015. In particular, public trust in CSOs dropped by 20 percentage points from 2011 to 2015, perhaps due to the negative effect of the 'Foreign Agents' Law.

The proportion of Russians participating in other types of civil society practices is also fairly stable (see Figure 34). Data from the HSE monitoring reveals that Russians are more likely to be involved in volunteer work for the community, such as *subbotniks* (voluntary collective efforts to remove garbage, plant trees, etc. in the neighbourhood), residents' meetings, etc. On average, about one-fifth of adult Russians take part in these types of activities. The lowest participation bordering on the statistical error (2%) is observed in public protests, rallies and peaceful demonstrations.

Legal framework and financing

The legal and regulatory framework for non-profit organisations is constantly changing: since its adoption in December 1995, Federal Law No 7 on Non-profit Organisations has been amended and revised on a regular basis. At the time of writing, the total number of amendments to this law stands at 74, of which almost half (33) have been made over the past four years, and just five were adopted in the first decade of the law's existence. This trend confirms the government's growing attention to civil society generally and non-profits in particular.

The five most recent years have been marked by the most significant legislative changes ever, influencing the situation of the entire non-profit sector and its internal structure. The current policy trend divides non-profits into those operating in the social sphere and considered socially oriented, public benefit organisations, on one hand, and "Foreign Agents" operating in the fields of human rights and environmental protection, on the other.

It can be argued that the recent legislative reforms affecting non-profits started in 2010 with the introduction of the concept of "socially oriented non-profit organisations" to earmark them as priority beneficiaries of state support. "Socially oriented" is broadly interpreted to include areas of activity (18 as of this writing) listed in the law, such as social services, environmental protection, education and many more.

Starting in 2011, programmes have been adopted on the federal level and in certain regions for providing support to socially oriented non-profits. In 2013, the trend was towards increased support of NGOs working in the social sphere. For the first time, new Federal Law No 442-FZ regulating social services specifically mentioned non-profits as social service providers and initiated a process whereby government could delegate social service provision to CSOs and compensate them from the regional welfare budgets. In 2016, another law was passed to reinforce the position of NGOs working to implement social policies; this law introduced the concept of "a non-profit organisation as provider of public benefit services". This category included "non-profit NGOs which for one or more years have been providing socially beneficial services of adequate quality, do not perform the functions of a foreign agent and have no arrears on any taxes, duties or other payments required by the Russian federal law".

There is also an opposite trend towards tighter control and pressure in regard of non-profits operating mainly in the field of human rights. The most notable and widely discussed step in this direction was the adoption of the law on "Foreign Agents". It is noteworthy that the law was passed a few months after the large-scale protests of 2011 and 2012, when people across the country disagreeing with the outcomes of the parliamentary and presidential elections took to the streets to express their discontent. This "rebirth" of Russia's civil society came as a surprise to many, including the government. The "Foreign Agents" law had as its primary purpose silencing and suppression of human rights organisations, such as the Golos Foundation that had monitored the elections and publicised evidence of massive election fraud.

According to the "Foreign Agents" Law, organisations which receive foreign funding (including donations from individuals) and engage in political activity must be listed in a special "register of organisations performing the functions of a foreign agent". The authorities have used this law as an instrument of selective pressure targeting human rights organisations. Since its adoption, the law-enforcement authorities have conducted large-scale inspections of non-profit organisations, some of which were included in the "Foreign Agents register" and thus forced to suspend their operations or even dissolve in a number of cases.

According to the Ministry of Justice, as of October 2016, 144 non-profits are listed in the "Foreign Agents register".[47] The law on "undesirable organisations" passed in 2015 enables the Russian authorities to ban international non-governmental organisations which the Prosecutor's Office finds to be "threatening the country's constitutional order". Organisations banned so far are those which substantially supported the establishment of Russia's non-profit sector in the 1990s, namely the Soros Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and some others (a total of seven organisations as of October 2016).

While the two opposing trends described above require in-depth analysis and reflection, their coexistence reflects the diversity of Russia's non-profit sector today. It is impossible to say with certainty that the recently introduced system of state support has always benefited regional non-profits. Nor is it possible to claim that all non-profit organisations are facing harsh repression from the authorities. However, both the so-called "socially oriented" non-profits and "Foreign Agents" share common problems, such as low public trust, shortage of funding and limited public involvement in civic activism and charitable giving practices.

Financing

The financial situation of Russian non-profits has changed dramatically since the 1990s. As noted earlier, foreign grants used to finance a significant part of many CSOs' budgets. The main reason for their heavy reliance on foreign grants was the absence of other funding sources. State support was absent, while society and business were not yet ready to engage in charitable giving or corporate social responsibility. Eventually, CSOs began to diversify their funding sources. By now, the structure of their monetary income has changed

47 Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. The activities of nonprofit organisations. Register of NGOs performing the functions of a foreign agent, available at: http://unro.minjust.ru/NKOForeignAgent.aspx

drastically. This is first due to the emergence of a huge number of small organisations financed by their own leaders and activists, and second, to the legal barriers to foreign funding and increasing support from domestic authorities.

According to Rosstat,[48] the nationwide average proportion of foreign funding of Russian NGOs stood at just 3% in 2013 and 2% in 2014. Interestingly, the largest share of foreign funding was reported in the Republic of Ingushetia (13%) in 2013 and in Sakhalin region (21%) in 2014.

On average, CSOs earn between 40% and 50% of their funds, including proceeds from the sale of goods and services and property rights, their sale to municipal and public institutions and income from endowment funds.

The proportion of charitable contributions stands on average at 10% to 20% of NGO income, including grants and donations from non-profit and commercial entities and charitable giving by private individuals.

Government financing of CSOs has increased significantly in recent years and is now available from all levels of government, including federal, regional and municipal. According to a report published by the Russian Ministry of Economic Development,[49] financial support of NGOs totalled 4.3 billion roubles in 2014 and 7.2 billion roubles in 2015, granted to a total of some 6,000 organisations. Nearly half of all funds provided to NGOs were awarded as the so-called Presidential grants (see Table 17).

Government authority providing support	Amount of support (thousand roubles)		Number of recipient NGOs	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Presidential Administration	2 968 000	4 228 200	1276	1377
Ministry of Economic Development	926	859.4	4630	3964
Ministry of Culture	784 873.5	2 077 372	58	199
Ministry of Labour	746 368.4	765 598.3	16	17
Federal Drug Control Service	-	10 200	-	8
Rospechat (Agency on Press and Mass Communications)	83.9	93.3	33	37
Rosmolodezh (Agency on Youth Affairs)	18 000	74 000	24	44
TOTAL	4 248 251.8	7 208 635.2	6037	5762

Table 17. Federal support of NGOs in Russia. Data from the Ministry of Economic Development, 2015

48   Russian Ministry of Economic Development, Portal of the automated system of information on support of socially-oriented nonprofit organisations, available at: http://nko.economy.gov.ru/Statistics/rosstat?year=2013
49   Russian Ministry of Economic Development. Annual report on socially-oriented NGO activities and development, 2015, page 7.

In terms of regional funding, since the adoption of the federal law on socially oriented organisations in 2011, most Russian regions have launched their own NGO support programmes which provide free or subsidised office space, legal, informational and methodological support to non-profits.

It should be noted that the NGO revenue structure described above reflects the countrywide average and may be very different for individual organisations whose sources of income vary widely depending on their field of activity, charter type and region. For example, most CSOs operating in the social sphere are financed by grants from authorities at different levels. In terms of charter types, many foundations are supported by individual or corporate donations – the latter is particularly true of corporate foundations.

Membership-based organisations (associations, unions and partnerships) mainly live off member contributions. The situation also varies across regions. The proportion of CSOs funded only by their leaders and activists is much higher in regions with underdeveloped civil society compared to those where civil society is traditionally more advanced, including Novosibirsk and Perm, as well as Moscow and St. Petersburg.

In terms of absolute figures, the average annual income of a non-profit organisation varies from region to region. According to Rosstat, the lowest average annual NGO income of 217,000 roubles is reported in the Altai Republic and the highest amount of 16,641,000 roubles, exceeding the former by more than 76 times, is reported in the Chukotka Autonomous District. It needs to be noted that Chukotka has just 115 non-profits, and while their aggregate income is quite low at 1,913,000 roubles, it works out quite high if calculated per organisation. The countrywide average is 1,879,000 roubles per NGO per year.

Data

In total, the questionnaire generated 248 responses from Russian organisations working in various fields (social policy, human rights, environment) and on different levels (local, regional, national, international). In addition to Forum members, e-mail addresses were obtained from public sources, and a link to the survey and a letter with an invitation to take part in it were emailed to more than a thousand organisations.

The participating organisations work in various fields, such as human rights (24%), environment (19%), social policy (15%), youth and education (12%), history and culture (8%) and 1% engage in club activities. In addition to these, 21% of the organisations were unable to choose a single area of activity, stating instead that they worked in a number of fields at once. More than half of the surveyed organisations work on the regional level (54%), one-third (31%) operate on the national level, one-quarter (23%) work internationally and the remaining one-fifth (21%) of organisations work on the local level. Their years in existence range from 1-5 (18%) and 6-10 (16%) to 10-20 (31%) and more than 20 (34%). Two-thirds (67%) of the surveyed organisations involved up to 50 persons (including employees, members and volunteers) in their activity in 2016.

In addition to the survey, 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with managers and employees of NGOs operating in the social, human rights, environmental, civic education and other fields. The interviews, lasting between 30 minutes and one hour, were conducted via Skype or on the phone.

Challenges for CSOs in Russia

CSOs vary in their assessment of the rapid changes in the sector's development. In the Russian case, two-thirds (64%) of the surveyed CSOs have a negative opinion of the recent changes, while 12% assess the changes as positive and 17% say that the situation has not changed. It is noteworthy that human rights and environmental organisations are more than twice as likely as those working in the social sphere to assess the changes as negative: 82% and 79%, respectively of the former versus 39% of the latter type.

Figure 35. Distribution of responses to the question "How do you evaluate, has the situation of your NGO become better or worse during the last three years?" (in per cents, N =192)

Better	12%
Worse	64%
Hasn't know	17%
Don/t know	7%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

According to 59% of the respondents, the legal framework has been their greatest challenge. As mentioned above, the current legal regulation creates unequal conditions for different organisations. Moreover, it creates an artificial division between organisations considered 'socially-oriented' and therefore supported, and those deemed "Foreign Agents" and therefore suppressed.

"Changes in national laws have tightened the regulation of independent NGOs in Russia. In fact, the government has divided NGOs into two camps. There is that list of 'Foreign Agents'; this status prevents organisations from competitively participating in public affairs and social policy." (answer to an open question)

The "foreign agent" status has undermined the public image of non-profit organisations. According to many CSOs, their operation has been "stigmatised" and "marginalised" in Russian society.

"As for the legislation, i.e. the law on Foreign Agents, we are not currently receiving any foreign funding, but I believe the really important thing is that this law undermines the public image of non-profit organisations in principle. When this law was in the process of being adopted and discussed, I could hear from people, "Those NGOs, they are all [foreign] agents." We had worked for so many years to build our image, to earn public trust and get people to volunteer and make donations, and here we are now. This law has clearly caused quite a lot of damage, particularly to our public image. And of course, the organisations themselves have been affected, and we know it. It should not be like that, I think." (Interview R3)

Figure 36. Distribution of responses to the question "How do you evaluate the context conditions for your CSOs with regard to legal framework, financing, private donations, public opinion, state support, volunteering and media coverage?"
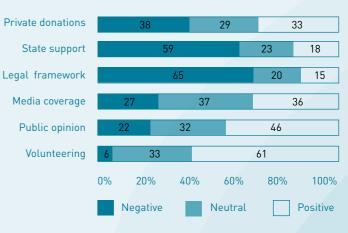
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Private donations	38	29	33
State support	59	23	18
Legal framework	65	20	15
Media coverage	27	37	36
Public opinion	22	32	46
Volunteering	6	33	61

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Negative ■ Neutral □ Positive

"We have become outcasts in our own country." (answer to an open question)

Financing their operation is the second biggest challenge faced by non-profit organisations in Russia. While foreign grants are now taboo, less financing is available domestically due to the country's difficult economic situation, closure of the Ministry of Economic Development's regional socially-oriented NGO support programme and dwindling funding from local budgets. In addition to this, low public and corporate trust has a negative effect on CSOs.

"The sector's overall situation is challenging. [Lack of access to] foreign funding is not the main reason why organisations are in crisis. Our region has never had many organisations receiving foreign funds…. A really big problem is that the programme financed by the federal Ministry of Economic Development has been discontinued. This programme provided [financial] support to regions across the country enabling them to distribute subsidies to CSOs. …And now that due to the crisis no money is available in our regional budget for NGO support, this [federal] programme has also ended… Today, NGOs at both the local and regional levels have very few opportunities for obtaining support." (Interview R4)

"Our problems are common for those of us deemed 'Foreign Agents'. It is absolutely certain that all sources of government funding, which we used to access quite often in the past, are now closed to us. We also have serious problems with accessing funds from businesses. As an example, many companies, particularly those with foreign participation, have a clause in their [grant] contracts that the recipient should not have any problems with the authorities. Accordingly, if the [Russian] authorities have problems with our activity, our contracts [with corporate donors] must be terminated. It is unlikely that businesses, particularly big businesses, for which government relations are an important aspect of overall

performance, would support 'Foreign Agents'. Oddly enough, in contrast to human rights organisations, we have lost almost all our Western donors, those 'social' donors who are now more cautious working in Russia for fear of the 'Dima Yakovlev' Law and some others, so they prefer not to support 'Foreign Agents' openly, if at all. In this respect, the situation is quite challenging. We have a precious few potential funding sources left, and this is indeed a new challenge to our organisation's financial sustainability." (Interview R4)

Nevertheless, a number of organisations consider the current financial challenges as an opportunity to rethink their activities, diversify their funding sources and gain financial independence.

"This seemingly negative trend can in fact serve as a strategic foundation for promoting NGOs' financial independence and also their political independence. Stronger and more professional NGOs are now considering ways of generating an independent income via service provision (e.g. in education, health, culture and social sphere). As for those NGOs that are slightly weaker, they are thinking about hiring younger people, including those with entrepreneurial skills. This may lay the basis for genuine partnership and cooperation between NGOs and businesses, which is fundamentally different from the donor/grant-seeker model." (Interview R4)

Almost half of all organisations surveyed share a negative assessment of the current government support of non-profits. This opinion is based on examples of unfair, from the NGO perspective, distribution of government grants. The interviewed leaders of organisations often mentioned corruption in the government's grant-making system.

"There is a certain group of organisations which always have access to [government financial] support, and getting in this group is very difficult. And I keep hearing the same thing from colleagues in other regions: there seems to be [government financial] support available, but getting in the circle [of those granted such support] is extremely difficult." (Interview R11)

"Although government funding is announced as an open call, it is clearly a closed competition. There have been so many publications about it that I have nothing more to say. Regional funding has decreased several-fold. And once again, it turns out to be a closed competition. Both businesses and the public are negatively affected by this." (Interview R4)

Yet for some organisations, even a small grant from the government can be essential for continuing their operation and for survival.

"It has been a challenging year, we ended some of our large-scale projects. We have refused foreign funding and only accept Russian grants. Therefore, we find it difficult to finance the organisation's administrative costs and numerous ongoing initiatives. We have successfully received one Presidential grant. Hopefully, there will be opportunities available on the federal and regional level to help us support all of our projects." (Interview R4)

The third major challenge faced by CSOs, which in many ways is the root cause of many other problems, is a lack of public awareness of NGO activities and low public trust.

"Public attitudes towards civil society organisations are that they are money-launderers, or else they should work for free and be totally altruistic. There is no middle ground between these [two extremes]. Many people are not sure what a non-profit organisation is." (Interview R5)

"We used to have print media reporting on our activities literally every week, but recently they have 'turned off the tap' on us in the press, although many outlets, both regional and the federal, used to cover us before." (Interview R1)

The fourth challenge is the increased amount of red tape and administrative costs. Non-profit organisations are forced, in their own words, "to file reports almost every month", and the resource centres "have doubled" the amount of educational materials used to train NGO workers in filling out the required reports.

"Starting this year, the tax authorities and pension fund have tightened their reporting requirements. There is cheating and pressure [on their side]. In recent years, we have reported 'zeros' [in financial statements]. But [the authorities] keep imposing fines on us, sometimes as large as one to three thousand [roubles], for failure to submit a report on occupational diseases of our volunteers. We operate without funding, yet we are forced to file reports almost every month with the Pension Fund, reports with 'zeros' in them. They keep cheating and changing deadlines and then punish us for failure to report on time." (Interview R1)

"There's an absolute increase in administrative costs. Moreover, I can even say that it is not unique to NGOs, but applies to any administrative structure, whether it is a business, individual entrepreneur or some other entity. There have been an ever-increasing number of warnings

and penalties for every error in reporting to the Pension Fund. Once you hire someone officially, your reporting requirements increase and you face colossal fines for every error." (Interview R4)

The fifth challenge, mentioned less frequently yet characteristic of the current context for the non-profit sector, is the government's pressure on certain organisations.

"We have faced situations where certain government officials saw some hidden threat in a particular announced topic for discussion or keynote speaker. We have heard of a few such cases were individuals invited to attend a discussion came under pressure or received 'friendly advice' to discourage their attendance of the event. Another thing we have faced from time to time is administrative pressure on organisations providing a space for discussions organised by our club; these organisations have received warnings of 'potential problems' should they host our meeting." (Interview R2)

Overall, a few trends have recently been observed in Russia's NGO sector. First, as a result of the laws pushing in different directions, the sector continues to be split into those operating in the social sphere and considered to be working for "public benefit" and those operating in the fields of human rights and environment, which are considered controversial.

"They are working to split the sector. Clearly, they started by dividing the sector into those dealing with human rights and those providing social services. Then they split those working in the social sphere based on whether or not they are public benefit organisations. The sector's fragmentation and lack of mutual trust have been caused not only by government policies, but also by certain internal trends, i.e. when certain NGOs were created specifically to become the recipients of Presidential grants; although they are called NGOs, in reality their only purpose is to consume this resource." (Interview R4)

Many organisations working in the social sphere today enjoy substantial support from the state. In addition to individual grants awarded to "socially oriented" CSOs, starting in 2015, the law on social services makes it mandatory for regional authorities to transfer a portion of their social welfare budgets to relevant NGOs. This provision opens up new possibilities for professional organisations to be integrated in the public system of social service provision and have a sustainable budget to finance this activity. Despite a few issues with the implementation of this law and with accessing state support, socially oriented NGOs tend to assess these steps taken by the state as positive rather than negative.

"If we do not consider human rights or expert organisations, but only focus on those NGOs which work in the social sector and serve certain client groups, we can clearly see a trend towards delegating social services to NGOs, which is associated with a change of attitude in the government towards NGOs as social service providers. This can be the future of a fairly large number of Russian NGOs which provide services to certain groups. Such NGOs can gradually become integrated in the [public social services] system, get listed in the registers of social service providers and expect to be compensated for their services from the public budget. The going will be hard, things are complicated, we all know the challenges, but nevertheless, strategically and politically this can be a very important step, and I believe that it opens up good prospects for organisations working in the social sphere" (Interview R3).

On the other hand, the situation of NGOs working in the fields of human rights and environment has been getting progressively worse. These organisations have been particularly affected by the "Foreign Agents" Law. Our findings reveal that these types of organisations today face a severe shortage of financial resources. Since their activities are stigmatised in society, businesses find supporting them too risky, while government funding is granted to just a few human rights groups. Faced by this problem, many human rights and environmentalist groups were forced to choose one of the following strategies: accept the "foreign agent" status and thus significantly limit the scope of their operation and fundraising opportunities, dissolve the registered organisation and continue as an informal group or completely stop any activity.

"The situation is extremely challenging for human rights organisations. The current legislation treats their activities very unfavourably. Most of them continue to receive foreign funding and are then forced to work hard to either challenge this status or, in some cases, just accept it – some organisations choose the path of non-resistance, and then they face difficulties in working with the public and public opinion, since such organisations are treated with suspicion...Honestly speaking, things are not exactly positive; instead, the trend has been negative so far. New organisations are being added to the ['Foreign Agents'] list, and there are some new ones added to the list of 'undesirable organisations' – those which have also worked, have tried to work in Russia. Now there is no such possibility. ... It is so distressing, this choice leading to isolation." (Interview R3)

Second, there is a growing number of GONGOs (government-organised NGOs), whose positions are becoming increasingly stronger with government support. Outside observers, such as other non-profits, often describe this situation as 'imitation' of civil society by the state.

"[We have observed] the dissolution of existing support funds and programmes and their replacement with imitations, government-supported GONGOs ... These include, in addition to NGOs, the so-called 'civic chambers', which are essentially part of the administration, and 'community councils', which are essentially affiliated with government departments." (Anonymous response to the online survey)

"The current trend is towards – how do I say it? – governmentalisation. There are organisations which appear to be NGOs, but their relations with the government are so close that these organisations are effectively pro-governmental." (Interview R3)

Third, there are a growing number of organisations focusing on patriotic and military-patriotic education and organisations promoting international and intercultural cooperation. This trend can be explained by the availability of special grants for such organisations on the federal and regional level.

"There is a trend among NGOs to choose non-political, safer topics. In particular, we provide civic education, and some other organisation working in this field are starting to get involved in some other things instead of their core activity. Let's say there is a project to support urban initiatives, but if we want to look deeper and educate members of the urban community how to stand up for their interests, [the authorities] do not need it, and you will face obstacles. If we wanted to address topics such as democracy and citizenship, we would alienate schools; it just pushes people away from you. Organisations try not to raise such topics." (Interview R5)

And finally, the entire sector of non-profit organisations is shrinking. The reasons include numerous legal barriers, dwindling opportunities for fundraising, soaring administrative costs, and the overall negative attitudes and distrust in society.

"The sector is shrinking. There was a time when attitudes towards NGOs were normal and funding was available, and the sector was actively growing. It could be seen from the number of new and interesting projects and new organisations emerging. Today, [the remaining NGOs] are just surviving." (Interview R8)

"A question arises for many people, especially those who were driven by enthusiasm when they came to work in NGOs, and the question is, why bother. Some people just suffer a burnout, lack the energy and resources, and some become apathetic expecting that things will only get worse. Some people ask themselves, do I really need it?" (Interview R4)

Best practices: How CSOs respond to challenges

Organisations have adopted different solutions to the problems described above, and a few can be highlighted as best practices.

The first solution is to develop professional expertise in a specific field. It enables the organisation to be in high demand and hold a unique position among its primary stakeholders, such as government, business and other non-profits. Moreover, narrow professionalisation lets organisations get additional reputation-influencing opportunities to attract donors' financial support. But this way is available for more experienced organisations, who found their own niche:

"Professionalism is very important. We have always pursued our goals in our own way. We have never attempted to seek grants for any other type of activity, although we might have succeeded. But one needs to preserve, not diffuse, the organisation's focus." (Interview R8)

The second solution for strengthening the organisation's position is building a network. A lot of CSOs create informal networks with other CSOs working in the same field. This strengthens the positions of these CSOs in the public sphere due to the stronger positioning as a collective actor and better visibility. For the internal CSO structure, the availability of the network let them easy and quickly exchange experiences, information about important event, support in difficult situations.

"Our unique experience is that of creating a network of organisations. Survival is a struggle for regional NGOs without some kind of centre... It can be much easier to access financial support for a large [network-based] organisation as opposed to an isolated regional group. And it can be much easier to transfer knowledge by providing network-based training and educational projects...Having a strong core makes it easier for us to deal with both donors and partners because the organisation is large and visible. It helps with raising funds. Second, we have served on all major [community] boards and councils. We make sure to keep in touch with human rights organisations; should we need legal advice, we can ask our partners, and we can have public support. It just works." (Interview R8)

The third approach is strategic planning. As a rule, CSOs are more flexible regarding external and internal challenges. It is an advantage in comparison with commercial organisations. Nevertheless, this has also an opposite negative side: by being in the constant process of reaction on the current challenges CSOs seldom formulate strategic plans for their development. Therefore, some CSO leaders see the necessity of adoption of the road maps elaboration, organisation of strategic sessions, other methods, which are usually used in business. It lets CSOs see their own development perspective as a sequence of concrete tasks towards formulated goal.

"Strategic planning and reflecting on their situation in the current realities is important for well-established organisations... We believe that well-established organisations with traditions need an upgrade. They need a new critical perspective on the current economic and social reality, on their support groups and target audiences, and possibly on a range of other issues ... Even older organisations with a long history of operation need new people with new ideas. Younger people may be in a better position to deal, for example, with new types of media, and change approaches to governance." (Interview R4)

Mostly important issues among CSOs are connected to the training of fundraising skills. The need for this is conditioned by the law diversification of the funding sources for CSOs: each third organisation (32%) has only one source of funding (Korneeva 2016). Unstable financial situation of CSOs creates a need to train the fundraising skills. During recent years, the number of educational online and offline programmes for fundraising increased significantly. But the income structure of CSOs remains quite traditional: only 1% of CSOs apply crowdfunding. In general, it means that the training of fundraising skills is for the Russian CSOs not only necessary strategy for financial sustainability, but also potential opportunity for the whole sector:

"Proactive fundraising. Organisations today need to look [for resources] in a number of different directions. We need to learn new things and make an effort to explore various potential sources of funding, instead of relying on just one familiar source that we have used for many years, which may no longer work today." (Interview R4)

The fifth best practice is aimed at the overcoming of the low level of information and trust to the CSOs activities. A number of organisations, who see the problem of CSOs public perception as a key problem, try to increase the knowledge of people about CSOs and the opportunities they provide through mass media, own on-line media and social advertising.

Some organisations speak also about the law understanding of CSOs also among the authorities. To solve this problem, a need to teach the authorities on issues of interactions with CSOs is recognised:

"We need to go out and educate them... We need to tell municipal officials about our activities, explain to them what non-profit organisations are and why we can work together. We need to demonstrate how NGOs can add value for local governments and businesses. Not only teach NGOs how to fundraise, but try another approach as well." (Interview R6)

Conclusions

Today, Russia's civil society and non-profit sector face multiple challenges, internal as well as external. Certain challenges are quite common and include problems with finding sources of finance, cumbersome internal bureaucracy, low public awareness of NGO activities and low public trust. But the most important are external challenges connected with the legal framework and state support.

Thus, with the help of legal regulation and financial instruments, the Russian official policy towards CSOs is aimed at their division: on one hand, the government has been creating a favourable environment for organisations working in the social sphere, but on the other, has taken restrictive measures against human rights and environmental organisations. These two opposite trends reflected in the legal framework are experienced by organisations in their everyday work as the government's "two hands" acting in different ways in respect to civil society.

As a result, civil society is faced today with the problem of internal division into "us" and "them", into those who are "relevant" and those who are "always in the way", and with the challenge of restructuring. By strengthening the financial positions of socially-oriented organisations and cutting off access to foreign and domestic funding for human rights organisations, this policy has shaped a new structure of the non-profit sector, characterised by major internal imbalances. Its implications are yet to be fully understood, but the observed trends, according to the CSOs surveyed, are already well-established and most likely long term.

Nonetheless, organisations are finding ways of dealing with these challenges by building and expanding their regional networks, reaching out to traditional and new media, continuing to develop professional expertise and reconsidering strategies of fundraising and strategic planning.

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Federal Law No 7-FZ of 12 January 1996 on Non-profit Organisations.

List of Interviews:

Interview R1: regional environmental NGO
Interview R2: local club
Interview R3: regional infrastructural NGO working on civil society development
Interview R4: regional infrastructural NGO working on civil society development
Interview R5: local NGO working on youth services
Interview R6: local NGO working on social services
Interview R7: national NGO working on youth services
Interview R8: national human rights NGO
Interview R9: regional infrastructural NGO
Interview R10: regional human rights NGO
Interview R11: local NGO working with social services

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Measuring the state of civil society...

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Annex: Questionnaire

Russia

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1 Please state the organisation's name and contact data (not mandatory)

2 How do you evaluate, has the situation of your NGO became better or worse during the last 3 years?

☐ better   ☐ worse   ☐ stayed the same

3 How do you evaluate the context conditions for your NGOs with regard to legal framework, financing, private donations, public opinion, state support, volunteering and media coverage?

Context conditions with regard to	Very negative 1	Negative 2	Neutral 3	Positive 4	Very positive 5	Not applicable
Legal framework						
Financing						
Private donations						
Public opinion						
State support						
Volunteering						
Media coverage						

4 What kind of major challenges have civil society organisations faced in your country over the last year? (name 3 of them and explain in 1-2 sentences)

5 What kind of challenges has your organisation faced over the last year? (name 3 of them and explain in 1-2 sentences)

6 Has your organisation found some interesting solutions / best practices for the given challenges? Briefly describe. (Under "best practices" we mean innovative solutions, practices, initiatives, which allow civil society organisations to face and react to challenges.)

7 In which field is your organisation working?

☐ human rights
☐ environment
☐ social policy
☐ youth and education
☐ history and culture
☐ sport and hobby clubs
☐ other

8 In what form does your organisations operate?

☐ Registered organisation
☐ Non-registered organisation – grassroots movement
☐ Non-registered organisation – professional movement
☐ Other: ….

9 How long does your organisation exist?

☐ less than 1 year
☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 10-20 years
☐ more than 20 years

10 How many people (employers, volunteers, members) are involved into your organisation in the year 2016?

☐ Less than 10 people
☐ 10-50 people
☐ 50-100 people
☐ 100-200 people
☐ More than 200 people

11 On which level does your organisation work mostly (you can choose 1-2 options)?

☐ In the capital city only
☐ In non-capital city/town
☐ In the rural community
☐ On the regional level (a number of cities or communities)
☐ On the national level
☐ On the international level

12 Do you want to tell about your best practices to the other civil society organisations in other countries (through an interview)?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please write your contact data, and the scholar will come back to you to organise an interview (not in all cases, depending on the study needs). The contacts will be treated separately from the survey analysis.

If you would prefer just to send some text about your best practice, please inform us about it here.

NOTES

Impressum

"This is very interesting research, whose main value is the analysis of specific data and trends. For an interested reader, who can be an expert or civic activist, this research will provide unique material for reflection and planning of their activities."

Professor Evgeny Gontmakher, member of the Committee of Civil Initiatives (Russia)

"There is never enough research. We are glad that EU-Russia Civil Society Forum has launched its own research project. It is great that this is a cross-country research, which includes Russia. We hope that the research will be continued, and we will be able not only to see the situations in different countries, but also its dynamics. Of course, we would like the dynamics to reflect those trends and phenomena that positively influence and develop our sector."

Elena Topoleva-Soldunova, Director of the Agency for Social Information (ASI), member of the Civic Chamber (Russia)

"Space for civil society is shrinking all over the world, including Europe. The report provides ample evidence of how civil society and its non-profit organisations are currently fighting to make ends meet and to continue to provide avenues for active participation and civicness. But it is due time that Brussels take responsibility for becoming the watchdog on behalf of civicness and civil society, at least in the member states of the European Union!"

Professor Annette Zimmer, Social Policy and Comparative Politics, Münster University (Germany)

Your feedback & contribution

Your comments and proposals are very welcome, especially on further thematic aspects and countries to be studied and included in following reports. Send your feedback and ideas to research@eu-russia-csf.org

Other CSF publications

We also invite you to look at our series of publications "What is Happening within the Civil Society" aimed at providing a better overview of the current state of civil society in single EU countries. See our website: www.eu-russia-csf.org

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