



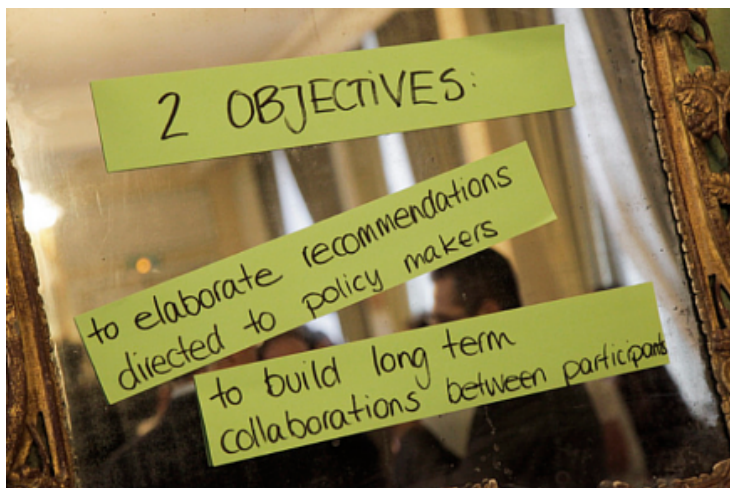
# **CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

**of the Western Balkans Summit Series**

## **PARIS**

**July 2016**

# RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



The Civil Society Forum (CSF) brought together more than 100 activists and representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the European Union (EU) and the Western Balkans (WB) to formulate recommendations for the future of the European project, and the integration of the Western Balkans countries.

This forum was organised on the occasion of the 3rd intergovernmental Summit of Western Balkans and EU countries to be held in Paris on the 4th July 2016. It followed the Civil Society Forum held in Vienna in August 2015, and in Novi Sad and Belgrade in May 2016. The recommendations elaborated in Paris built on the recommendations of Belgrade and Novi Sad Forum.

The main topics discussed in Paris were: **Migration, climate change and green growth, bilateral disputes, youth cooperation and democratic governance.**

In Paris, the Civil Society Forum had two main objectives:

The first objective was for the Civil Society to have a say in the official political debate on the future of the Western Balkans.



Members of the European Parliament, including its Vice-President Ulrike Lunacek, Rochard Howitt, Tanja Fajon, Alojz Peterle and Majlinda Bregu, the Chairwoman of the European Integration Committee of the Parliament of Albania - Moderated by Lorenzo Marsili (European Alternatives)

The recommendations of the Civil Society were therefore presented and discussed with Parliamentarians and European Ministers. Four **Members of the European Parliament**, including its Vice-President **Ulrike Lunacek**, **Rochard Howitt**, **Tanja Fajon** and **Alojz Peterle** and of **Majlinda Bregu**, the Chairwoman of the European Integration Committee of the Parliament of Albania participated to the morning sessions. **Harlem Désir**, **Secretary of State for European Affairs (France)** and **Sebastian Kurz**, **Minister of Foreign Affairs (Austria)**, took the recommendations on and presented them briefly at the official Intergovernmental meeting with the Prime Ministers of some European Countries in of the Western Balkans in the afternoon of the 4th of July.



Ségolène Pruvot (European Alternatives), Harlem Désir (Secretary of State for European Affairs) and Hedvig Morvai (European Fund for the Balkans)



Sebastian Kurz, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Austria) together with two participants: Bojan Stojkovsky (Macedonia) and Donika Emini (Kosovo)

The second objective of the meeting was to build further collaborations between civil society actors and activists from the region and from the European Union.

Collaborative sessions such as the world cafe allowed people to further discuss topics of common interest, the concert of Darko Cargo Trio and the picnic in the garden gave the opportunity to relax and enjoy together, the evening debate on the future of Solidarity in Europe allowed for an overarching discussion on the future of Europe and the future of the Balkans in Europe.

Recent Social Movements from the Region such as the Colourful revolution in Macedonia, the Plenums of Bosnia Herzegovina and the manifestations against Belgrade Waterfront Development or in front of the Public media in Novi Sad were present through the participation of some of their main actors, but also thanks to a photo exhibition which included photographers ranging from young amateur photographers to established professional photojournalists. Photos are visible online [here](#)



Julia Druelle | Woman with whistle at the balcony - Skopje, 17.05.2015

At the occasion of the Forum, an episode of Talk Real, the online talk show of European Alternatives was filmed. *From protests to plenums* is a discussion about the present and future of social movements in the Balkans and the impact they have on democracy. It features Meliha Bajramovic from the Civic Plenum Zenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Dona Kosturanova, president of Youth Educational Forum; Dane Taleski, PhD in Political Science and Researcher from Macedonia and Móra Veronika, Ökotárs Foundation in Hungary. [Watch the episode here.](#)

The Civil Society Forum was referred to in a number of European and Western Balkans newspapers, including Le Monde, CDM, NovaBorba, Blic online, Makfax, b92 Tanjug, Faktor, Le Courier des Balkans, Mediapart and the website of the Austrian MFA. [More info online on wb-csf.eu](#)

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# Climate Change & Green Growth

**We congratulate** the Governments of the region for signing the COP21 and committing in the “Podgorica Agreement” to implement the EU 2050 Road Map.

**We support** the implementation of the Western Balkans Sustainability Charter [1], which requires significant financial commitments to become a reality.

**We urge** the governments of the region to cancel the €5 Billion plus pipeline of new coal projects (& existing subventions) redirecting these funds to finance the Sustainability Charter to meet EU standards, create more green jobs, and reduce pollution cost (8.5 EUR billion annually, causing 7181 premature deaths per year ) [2].

## Detailed Points of Elaboration

- Immediate cancellation of all new coal plant investment and developing low carbon road maps by end 2017 for 2050 80% reduction in GHGs by 2050 ramping up solar and wind – with due consideration for Environmental protection
- The cessation of subventions (direct and indirect) to Trans Pacific Partnerships (TPPs) and mines
- Refocusing of coal plant investment to Energy Efficiency. Energy Efficiency (EE) funds made operational in each state within 12 months (June 2017)
- Training programmes rolled out in to upgrade skills in Energy Efficiency – with a specific focus on creating jobs for young people and retraining of miners and workers in TPPs, starting within 12 months
- Ideally doubling of Energy Efficiency targets to be 2% per year in line with EU targets, but at a minimum 1.8% per year as 2050 Calculator projects to meet EU goals

[1] With specific reservation about incinerators which have significant downsides in terms of reaching a circular economy and some of the targets, which need to be more ambitious to meet UN and EU goals and are outlined above.

[2] Which according to a HEAL 2016 report amounts to 8.5 EUR billion annually, causing 7181 premature deaths per year.



- All new builds to be ideally near-zero from 2020 as Energy Efficiency & Energy Performance of Buildings Directive stipulate or at latest 2025 as 2050 Calculator projects to meet EU goals
- Unblocking of legislative bottlenecks to residential EE retrofit to help fight energy poverty and create warmer homes; specifically requiring a multi stakeholder meeting in early 2017 including private sector, Civil Society Organisations and local government and Prime minister
- Adaptation of laws in order to facilitate the recommendation of article 1.3 of the Western Balkans Sustainable Charter
- Education and awareness raising both formal and informal on Energy Efficiency benefits and challenges







# Migration

## Political and Social Implications for the Balkans in Europe

- CSOs remind all states affected by the migratory pressure of their obligation to ensure full observance of international and regional human rights instruments to all migrants regardless of their migratory status, and without any discrimination and without any incitement to discrimination. We emphasize that each state has a duty to carry out its respective national commitments in line with international law. CSOs also agreed on their duty to guard and protect human rights of all persons
- CSOs underline the need to ensure protection of the individual right to an asylum according to the UNHCR 1951 Geneva Convention regarding refugees, and facilitate safe mobility by opening and strengthening safe and legal channels to EU countries as well as other Western Balkans countries, in order to ensure, without discrimination on any ground, the access to fair, prompt and effective asylum procedure (asylum as an individual right)
- CSOs demand that the WB countries be involved in dialog on defining migration policies on EU level, taking into account their strategic commitment to secure membership in the EU and that in the process of harmonization, inter alia, they will follow migration policy of the EU
- CSOs play an important role in establishing contact to all relevant parties and stakeholders, and providing quality and services, for this reason we invite policy makers to build on good practices that CSOs developed in previous period





## Bilateral Disputes

- We should tap on the potential of creativity: Consider arts and culture as a tool offering “human contact” and “out of the box” solutions to the Bilateral disputes related issues.
- Local ownership.

### **Following measures highlighted as those who help resolution of bilateral disputes:**

- Learning from experience and build on the previous success stories
- Reframing the issue
- Mobilization of affected communities
- Use media in order to share stories
- Use expert knowledge and any complementary support
- Appoint coordinator for resolving bilateral disputes; office of Human Rights

CSOs are part of the process of resolving bilateral disputes because they can:

Offer expertise

Raise awareness

Promote reconciliation





# Democratic Governance

There is democratic regression, both in the EU and in the WB.

On the EU level, there is a lack of action in protecting democratic governance which endangers the EU's role in the Western Balkans and “promotes” illiberal tendencies, and lack of commitment to enlargement which results in reducing EU's leverage in promoting democratic governance. Therefore, the EU leaders need to express themselves openly in favour of the accession of the WB countries.

**Democratic resilience and empowerment is guaranteed by grassroots movements and/or social protests. The EU should provide direct support to both formal and informal organisations.**





## Youth Cooperation

Civil society representatives welcome the establishment of a Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) and consider that the inclusive process in preparing RYCO's founding documents, bringing together government and civil society representatives on a parity basis, should be taken as best practice for other initiatives in the Western Balkan summit series.

Civil society representatives put forward the following recommendations pertinent to RYCO's:

### A) Governance

- Introduce transparent procedures for selection of national youth representatives.
- Make access to information about RYCO, and other youth programs, more available.
- Revise RYCO's work in a couple of years, with inclusion of civil society organisations in the evaluation process.
- National financial commitments to RYCO should not affect existing youth policies.



## **B) Membership**

Include Croatia and Slovenia, and keep participation open to other Balkan countries.

## **C) Objectives**

- Develop specific youth programs that deal with the past and promote reconciliation.
- Focus on marginalized and overlooked youth, such as socially excluded and marginalized youth (e.g. LGBTQ), youth victims of abuse, violence and trafficking, youth in rural areas, youth of minority communities and young people with disabilities; and prioritize projects dealing with youth employability and skills.
- Work in divided communities at the sub-national levels.
- Synergize with existing youth activities in high schools and the education systems.
- Enable data collection, such as necessary statistics on youth in the region.

### **Further on, we recommend changes in youth policies to:**

- Expand Erasmus+ in the region and allow access to other EU youth programs for youth in the region.
- Provide structural and continuous support to formal and non-formal youth activism, and support development of local and national youth self-organized bodies/councils/unions.
- Introduce an online registration platform that can serve as database for RYCO and as a networking resource.

CSOs will continue supporting youth cooperation in the region and offer their existing competences and networks. CSOs commit to tackle new challenges, such as youth radicalisation, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia, while addressing old ones, such as reconciliation, and through youth cooperation to continue our contribution in building sustainable peace.



## WORLD CAFE SESSIONS



Besides the five workshop topics which are, with the exception of Democratic Governance, part of the Civil Society Forum from the beginning, the world café sessions has enriched the CSF Paris by introducing five additional topics.

As a part of small groups, the participants were brainstorming and discussing women's rights and gender, knowledge management, grassroots movements empowerment, prevention of the youth radicalisation and integration of migrants. These are the topics that have been proposed by the participants for the discussions on the spot.

Notes emanating from the world café sessions are included as an indication of the issues discussed and should not be taken as finalised conclusions, but as a hint on other issues that were of specific interest for the people participating to the forum.







## WORLD CAFE SESSIONS



### 1. WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE ROLE OF GENDER

#### (Women's rights - women's nights)

The importance of education in the light of this question cannot be emphasised enough and civil society could have an important role in this. We need an emancipation on the level of a society as a whole, in order to attain power independence.

The level of the influence women exercise is very low; this reflects on the way women are perceived (image/body/sex) and the way they perceive themselves. On the political scene, there is no political involvement of the women, or they are squeezed in this patriarchal picture.

The inequality is quite obvious on the labour market as well, with its gender-based economics and financial inequality.







## WORLD CAFE SESSIONS



### 2. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Mobility of people facilitates mobility of knowledge. The history of Jeunes Européens France (JEF) is a good illustration of the statement.

In 1999, intervention and experimentation of “Europe at school” programme in France that grew into Jeunes Européens France that has finally made use of the existing tools/opportunities.

The idea was adopted and developed in a number of European countries, such as UK and Germany, and many others. The JEF section in Germany (Junge Europäische Föderalisten Deutschland) has focused on deepening of European integration.

We should aim at organising an International Seminar to train together and improve the programme.

It is online tools that made knowledge management possible and we should take advantage of them as much as possible. Ex: live presentation with immediate feedback (on new/available resources).

- Webinars with external partners
- Coordination necessary
- Simplification



## WORLD CAFE SESSIONS



### 3. GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT

Grassroot movements need to find a way to achieve more interconnectedness (on various levels - institutions, partners, research); Some of concrete steps to make in order to achieve this goal are:

- Make space for the grassroots movements at the institutional level
- Build bridges between the grassroots movements and the institutionalized structures: exchange of ideas, accessibility of information and experience sharing
- The relations between grassroot movements and governments are difficult. Governments often harm grassroot activities. Regional cooperation helps to overcome this. Regional mechanisms need to be developed.
- Share knowledge
- Structural funds: make funds/support available to the grassroot movements; think-thanks eat up grassroot support
- Bring grassroot movements into decision making processes





## WORLD CAFE SESSIONS



### 4. PREVENTION OF YOUTH RADICALISM

Understand the sources of youth radicalisation (unemployment, lack of perspective, mismanaged integration) - some of them come from the deficiencies of our own political, social, economic, educational systems

Mobilise all the possible channels to reach out the youth

Create an atmosphere of open dialogue where the misconceptions can be fought;

### 5. INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS

We need to start by defining correct terminology (refugees, migrants, asylum seekers) in order to lift the stereotypes (not accepting refugees out of fear for the welfare systems, avoiding intercultural mixing and socialisation)

Work on capacity building: involving migrants in competence centres and initiatives; meet ups with start up entrepreneurs; give reasons to choose one migration path instead of the other

Need for more grassroots initiatives: informal and not-institutionalised; focus on local solutions; identity communities

Personal experiences matter!

Learn from the Balkans past: use tools and strategies used in Bosnia and Herzegovina for instance, involvement, empowerment, active listening.



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