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A network of policy centres in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

## PASOS

*An initiative to strengthen independent think-tanks to ensure the lessons of transition are understood, shared, and applied*

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# I STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 1. WHAT IS PASOS?

PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society) is a voluntary association of independent policy centres (think-tanks) from Central and Eastern Europe (EU new member states, South-East Europe, and Turkey) and the former Soviet Union (EU's eastern neighbourhood and Central Asia)<sup>1</sup>, and other independent policy centres with a focus on transition issues facing the region.

PASOS is a vibrant regional platform, open to co-operation and partnerships to address key regional and international policy challenges. Since its launch in 2005, PASOS has grown from 23 members to comprise 40 independent policy centres spanning more than 25 countries.

Due to its geographic coverage, PASOS is well positioned to serve as an interface between policymaking communities in EU members and the countries of South-East Europe, Turkey, the EU's eastern neighbourhood, and Central Asia. PASOS combines a forward-looking Euro-Atlantic perspective with a strong focus on democracy and human rights, and economic development, and strives to facilitate the efforts of countries in the EU's neighbourhood to catch up with the transition to a free society governed by the rule of law. PASOS works to promote sustainable policy outcomes that address the considerable challenges facing the EU and neighbouring regions.

PASOS comprises member organisations from the PASOS region in combination with a Board elected by the members and a Secretariat<sup>2</sup> that works to strengthen, co-ordinate and promote high-quality policy expertise on the whole region. PASOS is an active, values-driven advocacy coalition, and a collaborative network of individual experts and teams of experts working across a wide range of policy fields pertinent to political and economic transformation.

Furthermore, PASOS takes a lead in setting quality standards in policy analysis and advocacy for values-driven policy change, backed up by analysis grounded in sound empirical research.

## 2. MISSION

PASOS aims to promote and protect democracy, human rights and open society values – including the rule of law, good governance, and economic and social development – by supporting civil society organisations that individually and jointly foster public participation in public policy issues at the European Union level, in other European and global structures, and in the wider neighbourhood of Europe and Central Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth called *the PASOS region*

<sup>2</sup> PASOS was registered in Prague, Czech Republic, as a citizens' association in September 2004, and the Secretariat was opened in Prague in March 2005.

### 3. CORE VALUES

PASOS generates policy knowledge and expertise by conducting evidence-based research, building local and regional capacities, and advocating for reform and innovation of national and international policy agendas at the EU level and in other international fora.

PASOS strives to promote:

- respect for, and protection of human rights and the rights of minorities, and promotion of an open society
- effective and participatory democracy
- good governance and the rule of law
- broad-based, sustainable development and prosperity based on a free-market economy
- peaceful dialogue between neighbouring countries and within countries.

These values are reflected in projects and activities focusing on **four key priority areas**<sup>3</sup>:

#### **Democracy and Human Rights**

- Development of effective strategies to promote and improve good governance, human rights (including minority rights), democracy and the rule of law
- Human security, including internal and external migration, the impact of migration, and related challenges at national and international levels
- Coping with the challenges of transition, ethno-cultural diversity, and conflicts
- Visa liberalisation and facilitating free movement of people.

#### **Good Governance and Open Economy**

- Transition to an open, free-market economy based on the rule of law
- Governance and anti-corruption strategies
- Ethics in government and political parties, accountable and participatory policy-making, and freedom of information.

#### **Sustainable Development**

- Sustainable development, poverty reduction, and social welfare
- Effective economic policy and political stability in the face of the economic crisis
- Climate change and energy security.

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<sup>3</sup> The four priority areas include a number of overlapping themes, as different policy areas by necessity have an impact on one another.

## **International Co-operation**

- International and regional co-operation and diplomacy in the areas of economic development, democracy assistance, effective governance, security, and conflict resolution
- Reform of international and regional governance and co-operation mechanisms
- Euro-Atlantic integration and EU external relations, in particular EU relations with the eastern neighbourhood, Russia and Central Asia, and the European integration of South-East Europe and Turkey
- The perspective of new EU member-states in EU policymaking.

## **4. PRINCIPLES**

PASOS acts with, and on behalf of, its members in accordance with the following six principles:

### **1. Service**

PASOS is an association representing the interests of its individual members. Responding to their needs and requests is a strategic priority. The main function of PASOS is to serve its constituency.

### **2. Leadership**

PASOS relies strongly on its representative and democratic character as articulated by its elected bodies. Balanced leadership of PASOS, from the membership, Board and Secretariat, serves to promote increased co-operation and inter-operability, bringing about complementarity and solidarity among its members.

### **3. Equality**

All PASOS members are equal. They have the same voting power, and are entitled to the same attention and efforts from all PASOS structures in meeting their needs.

### **4. Participation**

PASOS depends on the assertiveness and initiative of its members within the network. All projects are conducted in such a way as to enhance active member participation and a sense of ownership over the activities of PASOS.

### **5. Transparency and Accountability**

In order to achieve equality, active participation and synergy, all PASOS activities are conducted with maximum transparency, so as not to harm the interests of any member institutions, and to ensure accountability to the members.

### **6. Sustainability**

PASOS aims to serve its members and the region for years to come, so the policies and the management of resources prioritise the financial and professional sustainability of PASOS and its members.

## 5. OBJECTIVES

### Core objectives

PASOS aims to generate innovative research, and specialised policy analysis, in the PASOS region. It is committed to:

- Assisting the setting and implementation of high-quality professional and ethical standards for the region's policy community, raising the quality of research and advocacy, and sharpening the focus, relevance and efficacy of the policy work undertaken by its members
- Improving the dissemination of, and accompanying advocacy for, innovative policy initiatives from the region, with a view to improving the level of social and economic development.

### MEDIUM-TERM OBJECTIVES – 2010-2014

#### 1. Achieving National and International Visibility of PASOS Brand

PASOS will establish its own position and authority as an influential facilitator in think-tank and policymaking circles, while its members will gain increasing respect and influence at the national and international levels. PASOS members will have significant impact on actual policies and policymaking processes throughout the region.

The services of PASOS will be sought by a range of partners sharing its core values, and the analytical expertise of PASOS members will be sought at all levels in the market for policy advice. PASOS will become a recognisable brand name, associated with high-quality policy research, innovative, evidence-based analysis and policy recommendations, effective advocacy work, and the capacity to understand, address, and voice the needs and the concerns of the region.

By the tenth anniversary of the foundation of PASOS in September 2014, the implementation of the PASOS "seal of excellence" in professional standards for think-tanks across the region will have transformed PASOS into an internationally acclaimed network of policy excellence across the region.

#### 2. Strengthening the Capacity of PASOS and Its Members

In order to achieve its strategic goals, PASOS will evolve into a strong association of effective policy centres with comprehensive geographic coverage across the region and extensive thematic coverage of the PASOS priority areas. The PASOS name and concept will become widely recognised and respected as a result of its practical accomplishments and its "seal of excellence" in policy standards. The expertise of the analysts representing member organisations will be regarded as a leading asset of PASOS. PASOS will continually strengthen the association through refining and implementing approaches to capacity-building, training and mentoring, information sharing, joint monitoring and evaluation of policy recommendations, and setting standards for high-quality policy research.

### **3. Setting an International “Seal of Excellence” in Policy Research**

PASOS and its members will develop, formalise, and implement as an integrated part of their management practices high standards in policy research, including research methods, peer review, publishing, communications and advocacy. The PASOS “seal of excellence” in policy research standards will be implemented alongside a new standard of professionalism in think-tank management throughout the PASOS membership, underpinned by good governance, transparency and accountability, and high ethical standards. The recruitment, training, and nurturing of internationally acclaimed policy research capacity will be central to the realisation of this strategic objective.

### **4. Influencing Policies in Priority Areas through High-Quality Research and Effective Advocacy Strategies**

PASOS will apply all its resources and instruments to achieve significant progress and innovation in the four priority areas at national and international levels. This will be achieved through high-quality, evidence-based policy research and innovative analysis, combined with effective advocacy and well-targeted communications channels.

The PASOS network will have a well-resourced, professional advocacy and communications strategy, and will apply on a regular basis a broad range of effective advocacy and communications tools: high-level roundtables, briefings and consultations with government policymakers at national and international level, behind-the-scenes advocacy, and regular and well-targeted publications in print and electronic formats.

The PASOS members will build advocacy and communications into their core management processes, and apply professional advocacy strategies at national and international level. The Secretariat will work on the international level to promote the policy outputs of PASOS and its members in the four key priority areas to address policy questions of importance to the core values of PASOS.

### **5. Promoting Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democratic Transition**

One of the key objectives of PASOS is to facilitate greater integration of the region into the community of democratic, open, free-market economies governed by the rule of law. PASOS and its members will set as a key priority thorough policy analysis and effective, values-driven advocacy to address deficits in European Union and US policy interventions as a whole in the countries of the PASOS region, in particular concerning democratisation, conflict resolution, energy policy, and human security.

Drawing on the experience of the previous waves of EU and NATO accession, PASOS members will advise candidate and potential candidate countries in preparing, implementing and assessing necessary domestic political and economic reforms towards Euro-Atlantic integration. PASOS will work to promote effective policy solutions to enable the adoption and implementation of EU standards and legislation, and the cultivation of an accountable political culture promoting and adhering to the values of accountable, democratic governance, open society, pluralism, human rights, and tolerance and respect for minorities.

## **SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES – 2010-2011**

### **1. Introducing and Implementing Policy Research and Advocacy Standards**

Building its future reputation and professional standing, PASOS aims to define, develop and promote effective, practical, and internationally acclaimed standards in the areas of policy research and advocacy. The practices of the think-tank community need to be evaluated and analysed, and the best practices promoted as models.

Special measures will be introduced to involve PASOS members in discussing and adopting such standards, and to facilitate their adoption through special publications, exchange of experience, and mentoring/training sessions.

PASOS will systematically exert efforts towards sharing of best practices amongst its members, and towards promoting the standards, their application, and recognition of the standards as a think-tank seal of excellence.

*Outputs:* commonly agreed standards and through their application higher standards in policy work.

*Indicators:* Number of projects to which standards are applied; critical acclaim of projects; induction of new policy analysts to understand and apply the standards.

### **2. Developing the PASOS Brand**

The PASOS Secretariat, Board and members will develop and implement a strategy aimed at promoting the PASOS network as the brand name for a professional “seal of excellence” in policy work, enhancing the reputation of the members both nationally and internationally. Every product under the PASOS brand should meet a guaranteed high standard. Such a brand will require focused attention and a complex set of measures aimed at defining the audience and beneficiary target groups, implementing monitoring and evaluation procedures, and ensuring a regular flow of highly visible, top-quality policy publications from the network. In this way, PASOS will create an enabling and attractive environment for learning-by-doing policy centres associated with PASOS.

*Outputs:* A range of electronic, print and audio/video products with high-quality branding; clear rules on use of PASOS brand for members to observe.

*Indicators:* Number of projects where commonly agreed rules are observed concerning use of PASOS logo; awareness about PASOS among elites, policymakers, and other target groups.

### **3. Furthering Institutional Development and Sustainability**

To support the building of its international reputation, PASOS will become financially sustainable and adapt to the changing environment. This will require a flexible, but streamlined vision and a viable business model. The achievement of financial sustainability and a diversity of funding sources for both PASOS members and the PASOS Secretariat is one of the key objectives in the short term. This will be achieved by tapping into a wider range of available resources and donors, developing high-quality project proposals, and improving institutional capacity for fundraising and project management.

These efforts will be supported through effective training opportunities and donor information services for the members, improved management of human resources, higher quality of project management, and increased PASOS brand visibility.

*Outputs:* Increased number of project proposals submitted to donors; increased levels of funding secured; high-quality training in fundraising/proposal-writing delivered to PASOS members.

*Indicators:* Number of successful projects funded for both Secretariat and members; greater diversity in funding achieved; level of recognition of PASOS, including invitations for partnership or participation to PASOS members and Secretariat; feedback from training identifying that needs have been met.

#### **4. Assessing and Addressing the Needs of PASOS Members**

PASOS will develop the capacity to effectively assess the needs of its members on the basis of ongoing engagement. Questionnaires, interviews, focus groups or other means will provide opportunities for receiving feedback to inform the provision of services. The Secretariat, the Board and the member institutions themselves will actively participate in establishing an information channel that will, on one hand, provide information on members' needs and, on the other, evaluate the effectiveness and the usefulness of existing services.

*Outputs:* Up-to-date records on the needs and expertise of members in the form of databases and accompanying archives/publications.

*Indicators:* Level of response by members to surveys; feedback from training identifying that needs have or have not been met.

#### **5. Increasing Professional Advocacy Capacity**

PASOS will build its Secretariat's capacity to assist its members in increasing their capacities to advocate at the country level for the basic values that underlie the activities of the association and its members. PASOS will increase the capacity of its Secretariat for effective co-operation with the members, and strengthen the members' collective capacity for advocacy at regional and international levels. This will be achieved through developing and strengthening mechanisms and tools for effective advocacy (publications, policy recommendations, public presentations and debates, media relations, up-to-date contacts databases, and co-operation and coalition-building with other stakeholders).

*Outputs:* More focused, better targeted policy briefs and other publications; effective advocacy meetings with well-targeted policymakers/stakeholders; advocacy support to members' projects, including events and publications.

*Indicators:* Number of advocacy events attracting the targeted policymakers; adoption of policy recommendations or citation of policy recommendations; follow-up invitations from other policy stakeholders to PASOS members, Board or Secretariat; questionnaires on feedback from advocacy training; number of projects that build in to their budget advocacy activities; awareness about PASOS among elites, policymakers, and other target groups.

## 6. Publishing Policy Research and Expert Analysis

PASOS will maximise the effective use of existing channels and means for publicising research outputs, expert analysis, policy briefs, and advocacy statements. Where appropriate, after analysing the existing international market for think-tank publications, PASOS will create new publishing channels to maximise the effective targeting of the members' outputs.

The profile of the PASOS website will be raised as an effective mechanism for disseminating views and information, complemented by a greater focus on presentation of quality content from the members on the website and in its accompanying electronic newsletters. PASOS will showcase through its electronic and print publications the top-quality thinking of its members as part of a co-ordinated communications and advocacy strategy. A key component will be PASOS publications, such as web-based newsletters, policy briefs or a regular policy journal. Additional features, where they bring added value, will be blogs, cutting-edge collaborative networking tools, and audio and video presentations. This will be complemented by the efforts of the Secretariat to work with members to place their expert opinions in regional or international media outlets and influential regional or international policy journals.

*Outputs:* range of automatically generated internal and external newsletters; blogs, print and audio/video products with clear, high-quality branding; strong and up-to-date databases of key target audiences.

*Indicators:* Number of website visits and downloads by section; number of inquiries for print publications/policy briefs; number of citations of PASOS/PASOS members' products in media/third-party policy publications/policymakers.

## 7. Engaging in International Projects with Targeted Policy Impact

PASOS will support its members to conduct joint policy research in priority areas, either by assisting a group of members to prepare a policy research project or to secure funding for a project, co-ordinating advocacy or publications linked to a members' project, supporting a project through training in quality standards, or in some cases initiating and leading a research project. The priority areas will be reviewed annually by the Board and annual Assembly.

PASOS will engage in international research projects in its four key priority areas to address policy questions of importance to the core values of PASOS, in particular those with advocacy potential around well-crafted policy recommendations. The PASOS Secretariat will consult the PASOS Board when preparing project proposals, and will work closely with the Board and members when selecting the policy researchers for international research projects.

*Outputs:* More high-quality joint projects of PASOS members, and engagement of the Secretariat in members' projects, e.g. in advocacy/co-ordination.

*Indicators:* Number of joint projects funded and implemented; number of citations from policy papers used by third-party policy analysts/media/government.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

Two interlinked streams will run through the main activities of PASOS co-ordinated by the Secretariat, namely Services to Members, and Advocacy and Publishing, including forming a concerted “voice” of independent think-tanks on policy challenges and developments crucial to the PASOS region.

### (a) Services to Members

(to be reviewed through consultation with members on an annual basis):

#### (i) Policy Standards

A combination of setting common quality standards (a "seal of excellence") for (a) PASOS members on an ongoing basis, and (b) members' joint projects, including:

- Research methods
- Joint project management (transparency and quality of project proposal-writing and budgeting)
- Peer review (internal and external)
- Branding and publishing (electronic, print and audiovisual)
- Communications and advocacy (targeting of right format to right audience, as well as project follow-up)
- Institutional branding, defining the minimum standards to underpin quality, in-depth research into policy topics, advocacy standards and/or impact achieved through innovative thinking.

This will be implemented through (a) PASOS members' taskforces on the respective standards, and (b) appropriate training in the respective areas (conducted by best expertise in the area, sometimes by PASOS members where they have the appropriate expertise).

#### (ii) Project-focused co-ordination and training/mentoring

This overlaps with (i) *Policy Standards*, but seeks to provide a core set of experts available to train/advise PASOS members both in the pre-project phase and during a project. This will include:

- A database of policy experts for training and consultancy
- A donor news service (expanded version of donor grant deadlines currently provided through PASOS Exchange to become a service actively building on the priorities set by the Board to help PASOS members put projects together, find appropriate partners, write proposals, and secure funding)
- The Secretariat will seek European Commission-funded support (often working with technical assistance agencies), applying expert transition know-how to policymaking (governments and civil society) and capacity-building to civil society in Caucasus, Western Balkans, and Central Asia, and training of democracy and human rights activists living under autocratic rule
- Hands-on communications training/mentoring  
(writing policy briefs/op-eds/media training/advocacy planning and implementation)
- Fundraising and institutional development training
- Other aspects of think-tank management  
(to be determined through further consultation with members).

## **(b) Advocacy and publishing**

High-level roundtables, briefings of government policymakers at national and EU level, behind-the-scenes advocacy, supported and even driven by top-level Advisory Council of public figures from political and business world with interests in Euro-Atlantic integration and EU external relations, especially towards the PASOS region.

Activities will include:

- High-profile public advocacy events around major international issues and joint projects of PASOS members
- Publications (primarily electronic format), e.g. year-round blogs/policy portal and regular journal, highlighting best policy work from PASOS members
- Publication of policy briefs from PASOS members' joint projects in line with the key priorities and decisions of the Board and annual Assembly (a service to members to further promote innovative and topical policy work on projects identified by the PASOS Board as priority areas)
- Strong media focus, working with international media and media syndicates to promote leading policy work of PASOS members
- Channelling EU resources towards the consolidation of independent think-tanks, able and committed to promote democratic values and reforms across the PASOS region.

### **PASOS as a concerted "voice" of independent think-tanks in the region**

Where PASOS has access to decision-makers (through weight of numbers in individual countries of PASOS members and/or through members' and Secretariat's international contacts), the Board may call upon the members to formulate a co-ordinated "voice" on important topical questions, such as to EU institutions on EU external relations policies towards countries in the PASOS region, where:

- (a) PASOS members have clear policy experience, and
- (b) the issue is clearly related to the PASOS mission and values.

This "voice" will be expressed through one or more of the following:

- (i) organising high-level advocacy meetings with key national and international policymakers
- (ii) submitting a set of policy recommendation targeted at key national or international policymakers/political actors
- (iii) commissioning a set of policy briefs/op-eds from PASOS members (where a reputation or body of knowledge already resides), where appropriate from different perspectives (e.g. in the event of geo-political conflicts).

## II APPENDICES

### A. CURRENT AND RECENT PROJECTS

An increasing number of PASOS members are involved in joint projects, often emerging from bilateral and project meetings during the annual PASOS Assembly. Projects supported by the PASOS Secretariat in 2008 through LGI funding included a project on access to information at the EU level, and a Polish-Kyrgyz policy fellowship scheme. PASOS also co-ordinated for LGI a project on legal obstacles at the local level to tackling poverty reduction, involving research teams in Armenia, Macedonia, and Moldova.

#### **PASOS Board-led priority projects, 2008-2009**

A number of policy initiatives were chosen through the active priority-setting of the PASOS Board in 2008, and have or will come to fruition in 2009. As well as a project on alternative energy policy (including policy briefs on Russia, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan), a project on EU-western Balkans visa relations was supported, as a subject where PASOS can add value and a project that could complement the existing EU enlargement roadmap project and that fitted the stated focus on the western Balkans of the Czech EU presidency (January-June 2009). A roundtable was held with the presentation of the resulting policy brief and background studies to the European Commission in Brussels in the first week of March 2009. The project, drawing on PASOS funds from LGI, was led by the European Institute, Bulgaria, with advocacy and publishing support from the PASOS Secretariat.

#### **Policy Standards**

This project's objective is to produce professional quality benchmarks, and the ground rules for a set of guidelines, to govern policy work, so that a common set of standards applies to policy centres from different countries, in particular when working on joint projects. This will strengthen the credibility of the policy institutes concerned and the quality of their policy work by increasing co-operation between policy centres and the trust of other stakeholders in their products.

A first publication setting out standards in policy research, governance and ethics, joint project management, and publishing, branding and advocacy, will serve as the basis for an evolving set of policy standards to be developed with a working group drawn from the PASOS members.

Through the implementation of standards in joint projects, a benchmark can be developed for good practice in management, quality control and evaluation approaches, including peer review and impact evaluation, as well as common PASOS branding principles in publishing and advocacy.

## Building skills in policy analysis

PASOS is committed to supporting the professional development of independent think-tanks and in 2006, in conjunction with LGI trainers, conducted a series of trainings in *Writing Effective Policy Papers to Influence Decision-Making*.

Two training sessions took place in 2006.

21-22 September, Warsaw - Writing Effective Policy Papers to Influence Decision-Making (English language) for participants from independent policy centres in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Poland, and Romania. The training was hosted by the Institute of Public Affairs, Poland.

22-23 October, Istanbul - Writing Effective Policy Papers to Influence Decision-Making (Russian language) for participants from policy centres in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, and Uzbekistan.

## Strengthening the Policymaking Environment in Kyrgyzstan

PASOS partners: International Centre for Policy Studies, Ukraine, International Center for Human Development, Armenia, Strategia - St. Petersburg Center for Humanities and Political Studies, Russia  
Other partners: Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan

This project set out to increase the policymaking skills of independent policy centres and policymakers in the public administration in Kyrgyzstan through joint training exercises and through fostering mutual dialogue between independent think-tanks and government policy units. Training was conducted in writing policy papers, in advocacy, and in budget processes. The trainers comprised experienced policy professionals from the PASOS network and partners.

This project was funded by LGI.

## **Communicate It: From quality policy research to innovative communications to shape the policy agenda**, October 21, 2008, Prague, Czech Republic

This project took the shape of a one-day capacity building seminar to address challenges in communicating policy research faced by think-tanks. Thirty executive directors, senior programme managers and PR and communications managers from grantees of the Open Society Institute Think Tank Fund and PASOS member organisations attended the seminar, intended to complement other capacity-building efforts in the field and the existing discussion space created by the PASOS network events and the capacity building of LGI.

The training was preceded by a keynote speech by a leading think-tank communications expert, Peter Reid, Vice President of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA, followed by a discussion panel and training workshops. Practitioners in the policy analysis field were expected to explore the challenges of communicating policy research in Central and Eastern Europe today, but also to learn about new innovative approaches and concrete practices developed by think-tanks in the USA, Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe. The meeting was designed to provide a mixture of expert analysis, topical discussion, exchange of good practices and an opportunity for think-tank leaders to explore trends, good practice and challenges in communicating their policy products.

## Eastern Partnership Policy Bridging

This project, launched with the support of LGI in September 2009, is designed to support policy projects between think-tanks from the EU's eastern neighbours – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – and EU think-tanks within the framework of the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative. The projects will be combined with training and networking at the EU level to strengthen the understanding of EU policymaking among think-tanks in the Eastern Partnership countries, and to foster stronger links with their counterparts in EU countries. The project will also strengthen PASOS's advocacy work at the EU level, and will contribute to the forging of high-quality policy standards among PASOS members.

## European Democracy Assistance

Since 2007, the PASOS Secretariat, either directly or in conjunction with PASOS members, has continued with projects and accompanying advocacy work areas around EU and EU members' support to third countries in democracy assistance and development aid. Two high-profile initiatives were:

### **(a) The Challenge of the EU Development Co-operation Policy for New Member-States**

PASOS partners: European Institute, Bulgaria, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Czech Republic, PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies, Estonia, Center for Policy Studies at the Central European University, Hungary, Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS, Latvia, Institute of Public Affairs, Poland, Institute for Public Policy, Romania, Institute for Public Affairs, Slovakia

Other partners: Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University, Lithuania, SLOGA Slovenian NGDO platform, Slovenia

The goal of the study was to draw attention to how 10 new EU member-states incorporate the requirements of European Development Co-operation Policy into their national legislations, and to how they contribute to this policy. The output was a briefing paper, presented by the PASOS Executive Director to a session of the European Parliament Committee on Development in Brussels.

### **(b) Evaluation of the Democracy Assistance Policies and Priorities of the Visegrad Four Countries**

PASOS partners: EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Czech Republic, Institute for Public Affairs, Slovakia, Institute of Public Affairs, Poland, Center for Policy Studies – Central European University, Hungary, International Centre for Policy Studies, Ukraine

This ground-breaking project included a series of roundtables engaging governments and implementers, as well as local NGOs in target countries (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, and Ukraine). The principal funders of this project were the International Visegrad Fund and the Open Society Institute Think Tank Fund. In parallel advocacy activities, PASOS has also been especially active in the formation of the new European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), and successfully lobbied for the inclusion of two representatives of PASOS members on the founding board of the foundation.

As a result of the high visibility of the PASOS project on the Visegrad Four, PASOS has been consulted by the Czech and Swedish EU presidencies in their plans for a European Consensus on Democracy Assistance. PASOS has also been approached by a US technical assistance consultancy to submit a proposal for conducting a project on support to civil society in Cuba (one of the target countries covered in **Democracy's New Champions. European Democracy Assistance after EU Enlargement**, the book resulting from the PASOS project on the Visegrad Four).

The book has been featured on many websites and in newsletters, for instance CIVICUS, the European Partnership for Democracy, and the World Movement for Democracy. It featured prominently on the

home page of the Visegrad Group official website for four months. Thomas Carothers, Vice-President for Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, hosted a presentation at CEIP in Washington, D.C., with three of the authors of the book and a debate on the state of European democracy assistance and the influence of new EU members on EU democracy assistance policy.

In 2009, a subsequent project, **"Return to Europe" - Reflections After 20 Years of Democratic Renewal**, has received funding from the International Visegrad Fund and the European Commission. The project includes opinion polls and focus groups examining attitudes to 20 years of transition and also towards the democracy assistance policies today of the new EU member states, a conference on European democracy assistance, and two policy briefs on EU democracy assistance policies.

**From 'Fortress Europe' to 'Europe Without Barriers'?** - Priorities of the Czech Presidency in EU External Relations: Transatlantic Perspectives, Prague, Czech Republic, 20 October 2008

A trans-Atlantic think-tanks' meeting, organised by PASOS and EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, a PASOS member in the Czech Republic, was held in conjunction with the PASOS annual meeting (19 October 2008). The conference was widely recognised as the leading conference held in Prague in the run-up to the Czech EU Presidency of 2009. The event was hosted by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and funded by LGI and the Office of the Czech Government.

## B. CHALLENGES AND POLICY DILEMMAS

PASOS faces numerous specific existential and growth-related challenges. Some of these are related to PASOS as a whole; others are faced by its individual members.

**1. Diversity.** While geographic, thematic and professional diversity may be considered an asset, it also poses serious challenges. The members of PASOS differ greatly in their needs, capacities, environments, specialisation, size, and their modus operandi. This means that it is extremely difficult to design services that satisfy the needs of all members, develop research projects that involve all members, or establish standards and products that can be easily implemented by all members.

This situation leads to a policy challenge, both with regards to new members - whether to prioritise geographic coverage or the capacity of the new members in case of a pro-active membership recruitment policy; and also as to how to conduct cross-country studies in cases where PASOS members in some countries do not possess the necessary capacity.

One solution to address diversity in professional capacity is linked to the introduction of quality standards and to implementing a consistent policy of bringing all members to the point where they work in accordance with such standards – through exchanges between member institutions, mentorship programmes, joint projects together with more experienced partners, and other means of active capacity building.

**2. Regional approaches.** Geographic diversity and variation in interests and challenges between different sub-regions will be addressed by introducing frameworks for sub-regional co-operation, while sub-regions may be defined in a flexible manner depending on the issue (e.g. migration, conflict-resolution, Eastern Partnership, or cross-border co-operation).

When member institutions in a country lack the capacity, or interest, to participate in a cross-country project, a mechanism will be developed to effectively involve local experts not necessarily representing a PASOS member. This can be achieved through close co-operation with international professional organisations, and through initiating a comprehensive network of policy experts.

**3. Perceived favouritism.** Equitably involving member centres in joint activities, or in particular joint research, remains a huge challenge, against the background of the great diversity in geography, capacity, needs, and specialisation of the network members. Another difficulty is related to the preference of many donors for dealing with a relatively small and manageable group of institutions, often with regional limitations, or insufficient funds when the funding ceiling makes the participation of a larger group ineffective. In such situations, the decision may lie with the centres that initiate the project or, if the Secretariat initiates it, the solution will require efforts to maximise the positive policy impact and usefulness for the whole network.

**4. Competition.** Another key challenge for PASOS is related to the effective regulation of the relationship between PASOS member institutions and the PASOS secretariat, so as to exclude unnecessary competition between these, for instance in applying for funding. Although certain rules have been introduced in order to avoid the emergence of such a situation, there is an obvious need to further elaborate and clarify relevant regulations.

**5. Balancing Act.** A serious challenge remains as to how to optimise the management system of PASOS. On the one hand, it is obvious that PASOS cannot effectively function without a strong and capable Secretariat. On the other hand, allocating too many resources to strengthening the Secretariat may deprive PASOS members of the services they expect to receive instead. Finding the balance is one of the challenges that require strategic thinking and good timing of policy initiatives, as well as a parallel strengthening of services to members alongside the strengthening of human resources in the Secretariat.

**6. Donor diversification.** Sufficient and balanced funding from a variety of donors is the key to long-term sustainability, but also to the independence of decision-making within PASOS. While PASOS receives significant funding at present, the majority of it comes from a single donor or its various structures – namely, Open Society Institute. The policy challenge is to effectively use the time while core funding is provided by this donor to strengthen the Secretariat and increase its fund-raising capacity to diversify the funding base within the coming years.

**7. Expertise within or without?** A further challenge is the need to attract the best professionals and experts (not necessarily involved with the PASOS member institutions) when implementing concrete projects, while at the same time meeting the expectation to involve PASOS members in joint projects. Again, the priority should be the highest-possible professional quality of project implementation. This can be achieved through a number of ways: facilitating the capacity-building of member centres; bringing in as network members the most advanced policy centres; bringing in the best professionals as individual (associate) members of PASOS.

8. For **PASOS members**, the key challenges include:

- scarcity of local resources
- lack of supportive legal, institutional and political environment
- lack of professional skills, particularly related to policy research, fundraising and advocacy, especially at international/regional level
- lack of networking opportunities and partners in EU countries.

PASOS and its strengthened Secretariat will seek to assist its members to cope with all of these challenges. In the transition towards a strengthened Secretariat and funding base, low-resource solutions should be designed with maximum participation of the more advanced PASOS members in assisting their less developed partners.

Through the establishment of closer partnerships with think-tanks and associations from western Europe and the US with an interest in the region, PASOS members will be supported in institutional development and capacity building, but also with advocacy and policy research. The PASOS Secretariat will undertake the task of attracting such potential partners and co-ordinating activities.

## C. MANAGEMENT

The overall fulfilment of this strategy will be evaluated annually by the Board, and the evaluation reported to the annual members' Assembly. The match between members' needs and services provided will be revised at each year's Assembly. The Board will also refine the key priority areas for PASOS on an annual basis, and present them to the annual Assembly. On the basis of these priorities, the Secretariat will prepare corresponding funding proposals and advocacy strategies.

Effective management of PASOS relies on a complex balance of two approaches - the ability of the Secretariat to initiate (and secure funds for) very specific and targeted advocacy, research and policy initiatives of benefit to the members, and in parallel to support and promote the assertiveness and the initiative of the members themselves.

There are several instruments for the effective implementation of PASOS goals and objectives, as well as for developing new approaches: direct participation of the members in decision making (through *per rollam* email votes or voting at the Annual Assembly, proposing innovative policy ideas, and initiating joint activities); the Annual Assembly; the Board; the Advisory Board; the Secretariat; or *ad hoc* groups and committees. The functionality of these institutes and positive synergy between them are the only guarantees of success.

### Direct participation of members

PASOS members are able to participate in the decision making of the association through a number of institutional mechanisms, as provided by its statutory Charter.

The *Annual Members' Assembly* is of course the most direct channel for influencing PASOS policies, both through electing the Board and through making other strategic decisions (approving amendments to by-laws, development strategy, etc.). The annual members' Assembly is the highest decision-making body within PASOS, and the Assembly reviews the work of the Board and Secretariat, including approving narrative and financial reports and budgets and work plans for the coming year.

However, PASOS members have an opportunity to make decisions throughout the year by *per rollam* email voting on various issues. They can also contact the Board and the Secretariat either individually, or as a group united around an issue. Members of PASOS can submit public statements, calling upon other members of the network for their support.

The Secretariat and the Board can further promote direct involvement in decision-making through maximum transparency, through PASOS Exchange (the members' internal website), through the establishment of issue-based and *ad hoc* groups, as well as through other channels for effective information flow and debate.

### Board

The Board makes the strategic decisions between the annual Assemblies. Its members have to allocate significant time and effort to fulfilling their duties, and there is an obvious need to enhance its active participation both in decision-making and in otherwise serving PASOS (representing PASOS at various fora, initiating debates on important issues, developing various documents, and assisting the Secretariat in coping with its duties).

At least two PASOS Board meetings are held each year (half the Board is elected, each member for a two-year term, at each annual Assembly). The Board sets the ongoing priorities for implementation by the Secretariat between Assemblies, including selecting policy issues where the Secretariat should pursue projects and project funding, and organise corresponding research, publications, and advocacy events. The Board evaluates the performance of the Secretariat management.

As all this requires significant time and effort, there might be a need to develop ways to compensate these activities when appropriate, and to look for other ways to further motivate the involvement of the Board members in activities beneficial to PASOS. The Board might also consider certain informal distribution of responsibilities and tasks between Board members, who could take responsibility for either certain sub-regions or priority areas of PASOS activity.

## Secretariat

The effective work of the Secretariat is key to the success of PASOS, and the streamlining of its activities, as well as enhancing of its operational capacity, requires great attention.

Resources spent on increasing the capacity of the Secretariat will eventually pay back both by attracting more resources and funds, and by providing better services to PASOS members. Given the growth of the PASOS network, there is a need to quickly increase the capacity of the Secretariat to meet its commitments, and the PASOS Secretariat has successfully secured multi-year core funding, which has made possible the recruitment of a Finance & Administration Manager and a Development Manager in 2009. Further strengthening is required in the field of communications and advocacy, which will be implemented in 2010 if funding allows.

Another way of enhancing the capacity of the Secretariat is through outsourcing some functions when appropriate, and in this case involving PASOS member institutions when possible.

The Secretariat undertakes the following roles:

- (a) bringing together policy centres and potential partners for project development meetings, other networking events with partner organisations, and/or seminars/debates to shape the policy framework
- (b) supporting PASOS members in identifying potential donors and/or working with them on writing project proposals, and in ensuring that dissemination and advocacy, and the funding needed for these, are built in to the projects at the proposal-writing stage
- (c) if the PASOS Board decides, leading the project as a PASOS project, co-ordinating the research on the basis that wherever possible the research be conducted by PASOS members or other independent policy centres with the appropriate expertise
- (d) where a joint project is led by one PASOS member, supporting the project on an international level in either an editorial capacity (editing policy briefs/op-eds/press releases) or in an advocacy support role, working closely with the members on the messaging and targeting of appropriate media/policymakers, e.g. through arranging press conferences/press briefings/roundtables with decision-makers, e.g. in Brussels
- (e) working with PASOS members, in particular the project leader, in setting high standards in policy work - research methods, peer review process, publications and advocacy work.

## Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is not a formal governance structure, but comprises a number of outstanding figures of integrity who share the values of PASOS, and have relevant public policy experience and/or a strong connection to the democratic transition process facing countries in the PASOS region of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The Advisory Council does not formally meet on a regular basis, but the individual members of the Advisory Council support PASOS in a number of ways, including:

- extending their advice to PASOS on major issues of international policymaking of relevance to Europe and Central Asia,
- lending their names to PASOS advocacy initiatives with a regional or international focus,
- from time to time speaking at public events organised by PASOS and PASOS members.

While the first steps in this direction have been made with the launch of the Advisory Council with three founding members in May 2009, the process will proceed with caution so as not to compromise the values, impartiality and reputation of PASOS.

## D. IMPLEMENTATION

Effective implementation of the strategy depends on introducing a realistic timetable and benchmarks, as well as putting forward the concrete first steps in the proposed directions.

### **Strengthening the Secretariat**

During 2009, PASOS has embarked on a reorganisation of the PASOS Secretariat, with the aim by early 2010 of freeing up the Executive Director and project staff to focus on more effective management of projects and to submit more proposals for funding. With a track record of successful projects growing each year, PASOS is better placed to attract funding, and to devote more time to actively working with PASOS members to either submit joint projects in co-operation with them, or to identify among them a project leader who can submit a project with other members.

### **Funding**

The aim of tapping a broader range of available resources and donors, developing high-quality, well-targeted project proposals, and improving institutional capacity for fund-raising through effective training, higher quality of products, and greater PASOS brand visibility, will be further improved by the recruitment in 2009 of a Development Manager, primarily to liaise with potential donors, identify very early potential funding opportunities and calls for proposals, and to write high-quality, well-targeted funding proposals - to include core Secretariat costs and, wherever possible, to add value for the PASOS members through working with them on new projects reaching out to attract new sources of funding.

As this position will include support to the PASOS members - both running fundraising workshops and working with them on joint members' proposals - the Development Manager will be well attuned to the needs and expertise of the policy centres themselves, thus strengthening her/his understanding of the PASOS members, their fields of policy focus, and regional priorities. This dual function will strengthen synergies and mutual understanding between the PASOS members and Secretariat, and minimise the potential for perceived competition between the Secretariat and members.

The possible sources of alternative funding over the coming years will be:

- .. European Commission (both project grants and structural support)
- .. Governments of new EU member states (also UK's DfID, and Nordic development ministries - primarily for work in the Caucasus and Central Asia) - working on contacts together with PASOS members and partner organisations
- .. Private foundations with regional focus (most likely on Western Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia) - e.g. Bosch Foundation, Eurasia Foundation
- .. Partnership with multilateral agencies (e.g. Asian Development Bank, World Bank)
- .. Partnerships with technical assistance consultancies (the PASOS Executive Director has approached a number of these and met with significant interest, and has even been approached by a US technical assistance consultancy to develop a project on civil society support in Cuba)
- .. Private sector in new EU member-states (possibly energy sector, or emerging philanthropic foundations) - (note: this is a very weak sector to date, so the prospects of success remain remote, but a start may be made in event sponsorship - in 2008, one PASOS event attracted significant sponsorship from a pharmaceutical company)

**E. FINANCIAL SUMMARIES AND PROJECTIONS**

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>				
	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Intangible fixed assets	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
Tangible fixed assets	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
Long-term financial assets	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
Accumulated depreciation of fixed assets	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>€ 0</b>	<b>€ 0</b>	<b>€ 0</b>	<b>€ 0</b>
Inventory	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
Receivables	€ 3,188	€ 636	€ 6,236	(€ 37)
Short-term financial assets	€ 21,343	€ 33,728	€ 116,078	€ 66,283
Temporary assets	€ 2,576	€ 1,877	€ 1,127	€ 1,114
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>€ 27,107</b>	<b>€ 36,241</b>	<b>€ 123,441</b>	<b>€ 67,360</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>€ 27,107</b>	<b>€ 36,241</b>	<b>€ 123,441</b>	<b>€ 67,360</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Equity	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
<b>Surplus reserves</b>	<b>€ 12,288</b>	<b>€ 20,139</b>	<b>€ 28,437</b>	<b>€ 33,568</b>
Long-term liabilities	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0	€ 0
Short-term liabilities	€ 9,674	€ 13,383	€ 19,234	€ 16,896
Temporary liabilities	€ 5,145	€ 2,719	€ 75,770	€ 16,896
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>€ 27,107</b>	<b>€ 36,241</b>	<b>€ 123,441</b>	<b>€ 67,360</b>

<b>PASOS income by source (€)</b>	2005*	2006	2007	2008	2009 (confirmed)	2009 (projected)
LGI (%)	€ 158,634 (92)	€ 236,016 (95)	€ 303,231 (84)	€ 251,596 (73)	€ 260,370 (69)	€ 250,000 (72)
OSI Think-Tank Fund (%)			€ 17,322 (5)	€ 32,188 (9)	€ 2,567 (0.7)	€ 1,279 (0.36)
Membership fees (%)	€ 11,742 (7)	€ 11,998 (5)	€ 13,435 (4)	€ 15,127 (4)	€ 15,516 (4)	€ 17,500 (5)
International Visegrad Fund			€ 12,150	€ 37,200	€ 35,000 (9)	€ 35,000
Astra Zeneca			€ 7,941			
European Parliament			€ 5,000	€ 1,752	€ 2,628 (0.7)	€ 2,628
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency, European Commission					€ 55,000 (15)	
Office of Czech Government				€ 7,457		
Czech-Polish Forum					€ 5,492 (1.5)	
Other	€ 1,214			€ 396		€ 40,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 171,590</b>	<b>€ 248,014</b>	<b>€ 359,079</b>	<b>€ 345,716</b>	<b>€ 376,573</b>	<b>€ 346,407</b>

\* In 2005, PASOS started operations in March, when Jeff Lovitt opened the Secretariat. Two further staff members joined in July 2005, so this was not a full year of operations.

### Provisional fundraising targets:

2009: Non-OSI funding amounts to 27 per cent of total funding (€ 95,000)<sup>4</sup>

2010: Non-OSI funding amounts to 30 per cent of total funding (€ 140,000)

2011: Non-OSI funding amounts to 50 per cent of total funding (€ 200,000)

2012: Non-OSI funding amounts to 60 per cent of total funding (€ 240,000)

<sup>4</sup> By 1 September 2009, funding secured by the PASOS Secretariat for 2009 amounted to € 376,573, of which € 114,636 is from non-OSI sources, amounting to 30 per cent of funds, thus exceeding the target set for 2009. Some of the secured funding for 2009 will in fact arrive as second tranches in 2010, so the final figures for 2009 will be different, so these percentages are merely an indication of the percentage of funding secured.

## **F. PASOS MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (as of 1 September 2009)**

### *Albania*

Institute for Contemporary Studies (ISB), Tirana

Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Tirana

### *Armenia*

International Center for Human Development, Yerevan

Social Policy and Development Centre, Yerevan

### *Azerbaijan*

Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD), Baku

Economic Research Center (ERC), Baku

### *Bulgaria*

Center for Economic Development (CED), Sofia

European Institute (EI), Sofia

International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Sofia (*Associate Member*)

### *Croatia*

iDEMO Institute for Democracy, Zagreb (*Associate Member*)

### *Czech Republic*

Association for International Affairs (AMO), Prague

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague

### *Estonia*

PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies (PRAXIS), Tallinn

### *Georgia*

Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), Tbilisi

Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), Tbilisi

### *Hungary*

Center for Policy Studies at the Central European University (CPS - CEU), Budapest

Local Government Initiative Development Limited (LGID), Budapest

### *Italy*

Central Eastern European University Network - Transition Studies Worldwide Applied Research, Venice, Italy (CEEUN-TSWAR) (*Associate Member*)

### *Kazakhstan*

Public Policy Research Center (PPRC), Almaty

*Kosovo*

Kosovar Civil Society Foundation, Prishtina  
Riinvest Institute for Development Research, Prishtina

*Kyrgyz Republic*

Center for Public Policy (CPP), Bishkek

*Latvia*

Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS, Riga

*Macedonia*

Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), Skopje

*Moldova*

Association for Participatory Democracy ADEPT, Chisinau

Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", Chisinau

Institute for Public Policy (IPP), Chisinau

Expert-Grup, Chisinau

*Poland*

Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw

CASE - Center for Social and Economic Research, Warsaw

*Romania*

Center for Rural Assistance (CRA), Timisoara (*Associate Member*)

Institute for Public Policy (IPP), Bucharest

*Russia*

Strategia - St. Petersburg Center for Humanities and Political Studies, St Petersburg

*Serbia*

Jefferson Institute, Belgrade

*Slovakia*

Institute for Public Affairs (IVO), Bratislava

Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association  
(RC SFPA), Bratislava

*Slovenia*

Peace Institute - Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies, Ljubljana

*Ukraine*

International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS), Kyiv

*United Kingdom*

European Centre on Foreign Relations (ECFR), London