



Policy Association for an Open Society

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2015-18

1. WHAT IS PASOS?

PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society) is a voluntary association of independent policy centres from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

PASOS is a regional platform, open to co-operation and partnerships that address key regional and international policy challenges. Since its launch in 2005, PASOS has grown from 23 members to now comprise 56 independent policy centres spanning more than 25 countries.

PASOS acts as an interface between EU-based policymaking communities and the countries of South-East Europe, Turkey, the EU's eastern neighbourhood, and Central Asia. Combining a forward-looking Euro-Atlantic perspective with a strong focus on democracy, human rights, and economic development, PASOS actively supports efforts to promote freer societies governed by the rule of law. PASOS and its members promote sustainable policy outcomes that address the considerable challenges facing the EU and neighbouring regions.

Members originate from the PASOS region and, in combination with an elected Board and a full-time Secretariat,¹ promote high-quality policy analysis and expertise for 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 diverse range of policy fields.

2. MISSION

PASOS promotes democracy, human rights and open society values – namely, the rule of law, good governance, market economy, and sustainable development. PASOS supports independent policy centres to foster greater public participation in policy issues at domestic, national and regional levels, including the European Union, engaging with all relevant state and non-state actors.

3. CORE VALUES

PASOS generates policy knowledge and expertise through evidence-based research, building local and regional capacities, and advocating for reform, innovation and inclusion at national, regional and international policy agendas. PASOS strives for:

- respect for human rights, the rights of minorities, and the promotion of an open society
- effective, participatory democracy
- good governance and the rule of law
- sustainable development and prosperity based on sound and inclusive economies
- peaceful dialogue between neighbouring countries and within countries.

These values are reflected in projects and activities focusing on **four key priority areas**²:

¹ PASOS was registered in Prague, Czech Republic, as a citizens' association in September 2004, and the Secretariat was opened in Prague in March 2005.

² The four priority areas include a number of overlapping themes, as different policy areas by necessity have an impact on one another.

Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights

- The promotion of human rights (including minority rights), non-discrimination, democracy and the rule of law
- Coping with the challenges of transition, ethno-cultural diversity, and conflicts
- Migration and integration and related challenges at national and international levels
- Visa liberalisation and facilitating free movement of people.

Good Governance and Accountability

- Good governance and anti-corruption strategies
- Ethics and integrity in government and political parties,
- Transparent, accountable and participatory policy-making
- Freedom of information.

Sustainable Development and Market Economy

- Transition to a market economy based on the rule of law, sustainability and inclusion
- Sustainable development and protection of limited natural resources,
- Poverty reduction, social cohesion, and social welfare
- Effective economic policy and political stability
- Climate change and energy security.

International Co-operation

- Multi-level co-operation in the areas of economic development, democracy, effective governance, security, and conflict resolution
- Reform of international and regional governance mechanisms
- EU external relations, in particular in the PASOS region of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- Increase capacity of countries of the PASOS region to influence EU policymaking.

4. PRINCIPLES

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

1. Service

The main function of PASOS is to serve its constituency, namely its members and the public. Understanding, and responding to, their needs and requests is a strategic priority.

2. Leadership

PASOS relies strongly on its representative character as articulated by its elected bodies. Balanced leadership of PASOS, from the membership, Board and Secretariat, promotes co-operation, complementarity and solidarity among its members.

3. Equality

PASOS members are equal, with the same voting power, entitled to the same attention and efforts from all PASOS structures.

4. Participation

PASOS relies on the assertiveness and initiative of its members. All PASOS projects should foster active member participation and a sense of ownership over the activities of PASOS.

5. Transparency and Accountability

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 for years to come; policies and the management of resources should prioritise the financial and professional sustainability of PASOS and its members.

5. OBJECTIVES

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES – 2015-2016

1. Advancing & Communicating Policy Research

Building its professional standing, PASOS will increase compliance with higher policy research standards by utilising the existing know-how and encouraging an enabling and attractive environment for learning-by-doing policy centres associated with PASOS. Special measures will be introduced to facilitate practical implementation of such standards through special publications, exchange of experience, peer review and advice, mentoring or training opportunities, and an increased flow of highly visible, top-quality policy publications from the network. The Secretariat will systematically exert efforts towards sharing of best practices amongst its members, and towards promoting the standards, their application, and recognition of the standards, complemented by a greater focus on presentation of quality content from the members on the website and in its accompanying electronic newsletters.

PASOS will maximise the effective use of existing channels and means for publicising research outputs, expert analysis, policy briefs, and advocacy statements. In addition to consolidation of existing policy communications channels and improving timely responses to policy developments, PASOS will work to increase its presence in regional and international media outlets or other influential regional / international policy journals.

Outputs: Commonly agreed policy research standards; Peer review/advising working groups; A range of electronic, print and audio/video products with high-quality branding; Reaching out to broader audiences.

Indicators: Doubling the number of projects or publications to which standards are applied; frequent critical acclaim of projects from diverse sources; induction of new policy analysts to understand and apply the standards; steadily increasing the number of website visits and downloads by section; increasing number of citations of PASOS/PASOS members' products in media/third-party policy publications/policymakers.

2. Increasing Professional Advocacy Capacity

PASOS will build its Secretariat's resources 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). Members will actively promote PASOS, nationally and regionally, as a pool of expertise and influential stakeholders.

Outputs: More focused, better targeted policy briefs and other publications; effective advocacy meetings with well-targeted policymakers/stakeholders at regional and EU level; Advocacy support to members' initiatives, through joint projects and training/mentoring and fellowships.

Indicators: At least four advocacy events per year that attract targeted policymakers; regular adoption of policy recommendations or citation of policy recommendations; citations of PASOS initiatives or publications; partnerships developed at international level (e.g. research consortia, partners on training of CSOs); consistent follow-up invitations from other policy stakeholders to PASOS members, Board or Secretariat; awareness about PASOS among elites, policymakers, international civil society networks, and other target groups.

3. Engaging in International Projects with Targeted Policy Impact

PASOS will further develop its Secretariat's expertise to cover the project management, advocacy, research development, and co-ordination tasks of the network. The PASOS Board and Secretariat will additionally respond to members' needs for 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, supporting a project through training in quality standards, or initiating and leading a complex multi-year research or capacity-building project. The priority areas will be reviewed annually by the Board and annual Assembly.

PASOS will engage in international research projects in its 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 and relevant PASOS members when preparing international research or other project proposals.

Outputs: Numbers of high-quality joint projects of PASOS members, numbers of high-quality policy research and capacity-building projects for which funding is secured by PASOS Secretariat, and engagement of the Secretariat in members' projects, e.g. in advocacy/co-ordination.

Indicators: Increased number of joint projects funded and implemented; significantly increased number of citations from policy papers used by third-party policy analysts/media/government; development of core focus for capacity-building trainings/fellowships.

MEDIUM-TERM OBJECTIVES – 2015-2018

1. Increasing National and International Visibility of PASOS Brand

PASOS will strengthen its own position and authority as an influential facilitator in think-tank, civil society and policymaking circles, while its members will gain increasing respect and influence at the national and international levels, for example, through the four-year framework service contract to provide and present foreign policy expertise to the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament.³ PASOS members will continue to exert significant influence 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 an even more 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 2018, PASOS will develop its capacity as support mechanism for improvement of the professional standards in think-tanks across the region, gradually transforming into an internationally acclaimed network of policy excellence. This will be achieved through elaboration of mechanisms for sharing best policy research and internal management practices among members (including voluntary peer review schemes and adoption of standards of excellence for publications).

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 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. Integrating the Network through Identifying and Addressing Common Cross-Border Issues

PASOS will exercise efforts to further integrate the network and enable the members to fully enjoy the benefits of membership. Due to the diversity of PASOS members and the regions they represent, PASOS will strive to identify specific (new, emerging) issues within the priority areas identified by the Board and annual Assembly. PASOS will ensure that information on activities conducted by members is shared with other members with a similar mandate or interests, or regional focus (EU, Balkans, eastern neighbours, Central Asia) in order to facilitate their co-operation. PASOS will promote cross-regional, twinning and peer-to-peer projects, linking experienced members with newer, less experienced or smaller members, for example, in the Open Government Partnership in the West Balkans.⁴ PASOS will strongly encourage members to get involved in the core activities of PASOS either by hosting the Annual Assembly, playing an active role in the general assembly, getting involved in joint projects, offering peer review services, or running for the Board of Directors.

³ Framework Contract, September 2014-August 2018 between PASOS-led consortium and Directorate-General for External Policies of the European Parliament for a Research Network to provide foreign policy expertise, EU Enlargement, Eastern Neighbourhood, Russia And Central Asia. See: <http://pasos.org/13117/pasos-leads-consortium-producing-policy-papers-for-european-parliament/>

⁴ Advocacy for Open Government, a PASOS-led members' project (covering six countries), funded by the European Commission DG Enlargement, December 2012 – November 2016. See: <http://pasos.org/10938/advocacy-for-open-government-civil-society-agenda-setting-and-monitoring-of-country-action-plans/>

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

PASOS will continue to 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.

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 European Integration and Euro-Atlantic Partnership

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 the need to address deficits in European Union and US policy interventions as a whole in the countries of the PASOS region. This will be addressed through policy analysis and effective, values-driven advocacy, focused in particular on policy interventions concerning democratisation, conflict resolution, energy policy, and human security.

Drawing on the experience of the previous waves of EU 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.