



Open Government Partnership Coalition of Civil Society Organisations in Albania

On 28 March, 2014, in Tirana a Regional Conference was held on *Open Government Partnership: Challenges and Opportunities 2014-2016*. This conference was part of the consultative process the Albanian Ministry of Innovation and Public Administration, in the role of OGP National Coordinator in Albania, is undertaking with civil society organizations, in drafting the OGP Action Plan 2014-2016.

Participants in this conference were high-level representatives of public administrations, the diplomatic corps in Albania, experts, and civil society organizations from the Western Balkans. The Conference was addressed by U.S. Ambassador to Albania H.E. Alexander A. Arvizu, UN Resident Coordinator H.E. Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun, and Francois Begeot, Senior Representative of the EU Delegation to Albania.

The main result of the conference is a package of recommendations from civil society on the commitments the government should undertake in the Action Plan 2014 – 2015, as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1- Monitoring of information offices, improving delivery of information, as well as service provided to citizens.
- 2- Use of technology to train pedagogical staff in primary and high school education to work with children with special needs.
- 3- Establishment of an electronic complaints system, as well as a control mechanism dedicated to social services and standards provided in the compulsory education system (kindergartens).
- 4- Government portals and institutional websites should have the link “services” and a list of licensed subjects to offer services.
- 5- Drafting and online publication of a database of corruption cases/sanctions in the administration (at all levels), as well as judicial decisions, decisions of the Supreme State Audit, and the High Inspectorate of Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflict of Interests.

- 6- The sources of financing of political subjects must be made transparent.
- 7- Make transparent the financing and spending of public institutions on their official websites.
- 8- To continue the commitment on transparency of companies that work on extractive industries in Albania.
- 9- A commitment should be undertaken relating to the use and exploitation of natural resources (rivers). The contracts should be made transparent.
- 10- Unfulfilled commitments of the 2012-2013 Action Plan should be taken into consideration in the upcoming Action Plan.
- 11- The public should be informed about forms and levels of criminality at the local level. Closer interaction between the police and community to prevent crime and increase the level of security should be promoted.
- 12- Make public and transparent the history (success stories, efficiency, corruption cases) of families and individuals who profit from financial assistance from the government, in coordination with civil society organizations working on this issue.
- 13- A database for polluted areas (air, water, noise and vibration pollution) should be made public and the citizens should be informed about the consequences of such pollution.
- 14- A monthly report monthly on the activity of Customs, making the difference between businesses activities and citizen's activities should be drafted and should be made public.
- 15- The involvement of local institutions in the drafting and implementation of the Action Plan. Local institutions should undertake commitments to promote transparent and all-inclusive governance.
- 16- The international companies operating in Albania and the Corporate Social Responsibility should be made public. Coordination with local institutions and corporation to fulfill a part of the community needs is necessary.
- 17- The consultative process should include a multi-stakeholder audience, notably NGOs representing marginalized and minority communities, including those operating in remote part of the country.
- 18- In order to be able to meet a very short deadline, that is, 7 May 2014, the Ministry of Public Administration and Innovation should as soon as possible, provide a public consultation timeline, detailing the dynamics of the development of the Action Plan and the consultations to be undertaken in its regards. The timeline should be presented to civil society stakeholders at the inception meeting, that should also serve to present key findings of the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) report. The template of the Action Plan should also be presented to CSO stakeholders.

- 19- Consultations should draw on multiple channels of communication, including in-person meetings, online consultations, briefings, and community consultations organized by CSOs operating within these communities. CSOs should also seek to find allies among commerce entities as well (as in case of Serbia) as they have legitimate interest to benefit from greater efficiency and accountability for the government's actions. Citizen task forces or similar formations that gather citizens, may also be used, where possible (as in case of Bosnia and Herzegovina). CSOs may gather and summarize the feedback from different stakeholders and present it to the government during the course of the consultative process.
- 20- The Action Plan should encompass clearly defined success indicators as well as sources of financing of each of the measures involved. It would be also commendable to add to the template the means of verification for each indicators. For example, if the indicator is developed report to add the link whereat it has been published.
- 21- Public institutions should find ways to make public their decisions, aiming to reach interested parties who do not have access to the Internet.
- 22- Establish an online service to receive identity documents (birth certificates) next to local offices.
- 23- Publishing online of titles of the texts to be used by schools.
- 24- Digitalizing the library and the book archive on the basis of titles/issues/authors.