Needs Assessment Report

Turkey

Updated 2011

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TURKEY

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Introduction

This study was conducted within the context of EC-funded project Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) in the IPA Countries (EuropeAid/127427/C/SER/Multi/5), implemented by SIPU International Consortium. The Desk Research and Needs Assessment on Civil Society Development in Turkey study was conducted as a country report for TACSO Turkey with the purpose of providing input to the production of the TACSO 2 inception report. The aim of the study was to update the previous study conducted in 2009.

The study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of civil society in Turkey and the environment that it works in, including its strengths and weaknesses, and its impacts to date and the challenges it faces to its further development. The study is based upon a combination of desk research embracing all relevant documentation, including legal and financial legislation applicable to civil society, previous civil society mappings and evaluations, situation analyses, policy documents and country-specific academic literature, and a consultative stakeholder analysis carried out by means of focus groups, interviews and questionnaire surveys with civil society organisations (CSOs), government actors, donor organisations and other institutional players.

The paper is composed of four sections following the 2009 report format:

Section one provides an analysis of the civil society environment, including the legal framework governing CSOs and their work, the current donor opportunities and other sources of civil society funding, the government mechanisms for cooperation with and support of civil society, the policy framework determining government-civil society relations and public perceptions and support for civil society and its activities since 2009.

Section two gives an overview of the main features of civil society: the types of organisations, their key organisational characteristics, the types of activity they carry out, their main sectoral interests, their geographical distribution. CSOs are assessed according to their technical, organisational and institutional capacities, including human resources and technical skills, strategic strengths, analytical capabilities, external relations with other actors including other CSOs, government and the community, and material and financial stability and resilience.

Section three summarises the main achievements of civil society to date, noting key milestone achievements and broader social impacts, and also identifies shortfalls in civil society performance in need of strengthening and further development.

Section four sums up the most important institutional and organisational capacity needs of civil society in the country and identifies key strategic issues for the implementation of TACSO II project. By way of conclusion, recommendations are made for both the project's regional work plan and country-specific work plan.

1. THE CIVIL SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Reforms and changes in the institutional framework since August 2009

Since 2009, there have not been major reforms or changes in the institutional framework that governs civil society. Some minor directives have been published regarding the implementation of the law on the collection of aid or law on associations such as abolishing the notary approval requirement of the donation receipts.

One piece of important reform was the amendment made to the law on foundations, which was adopted in August 2011 widening the scope of the law by broadly providing for the return of properties entered in the 1936 declarations of the non-Muslim community foundations.

There has been some improvement regarding the freedom of assembly however in some cases disproportionate force was still used against protestors.

1.2 Planned Reforms in the Institutional Framework

As mentioned in the EC's 2011 Progress Report, *"Turkey still needs to apply constitutional provisions guaranteeing the right to hold demonstrations. Many court cases are in progress on charges of opposing the Law on meetings and demonstrations. Problems persist with implementation of the Law on the duties and legal powers of the police, especially in the south-east. This law is currently being revised by the Ministry of the Interior".*

Reforms on several laws (law on associations, law on foundations, civil code) are planned within the in Turkey's National Harmonization Programme to the EU Acquis (2007-2013), for increasing freedoms of association. However, although these reforms were planned for 2009, these have not been realized to date.

There is preparatory work on law on the collection of aid and further reform of the legislation governing associations within DoA.

1.3 Legal framework – an analysis of relevant law and financial regulations

The 2009 study was highlighting the legislation reforms on associations (2004) and foundations (2008) as significant improvements. However, the same report pointed towards important restrictions and implementation problems for CSOs. The 2009 study furthermore mentioned that the vague wording in regulations and contradictions between different laws were leading to inconsistent application of the rules and allow government authorities too many discretionary powers over civil society. The 2011 study re-affirms the continuation of this inconsistency, restrictions and implementation problems. The EC's 2011 Progress Report states that "*disproportionate controls and restrictive interpretation of legislation on associations remain*" and that "*CSOs continued to face closure cases plus disproportionate administrative checks and fines*".

The general view shared by various CSO representatives regarding the legal framework was that "it was better than before". Still, 30.49% of the questionnaire respondents counted "problems stemming from the legal framework" and 1.22% "problems in registering their organisation" among the top three problems they face in their organisation.

What Are Your Major Problems?

Problem	Percentage
Problems rgrd. Registration	1,22
Problems rgrd. Legal framework	30,49
High taxes	7,32
Weak relations with central gvnmt.	17,07
Weak relations with the local gvrnmt	15,85
Weak/Inadequate management of your org.	2,44
Problems rgrd. Access to modern..	4,88
Inadequate training/education of org members	8,54
Inadequate financial resources	70,73
Inadequate reliable information	7,32
Collaboration/dialogue w/others in the same..	19,51
Collaboration/dialogue w/others in other fields	7,32
Weak voluntary culture local and national levels	35,37
Inadequate volunteer support	37,80
Other	1,22

According to another study (CIVICUS CSI by TUSEV, 2010) *"Turkey's civil society legislation was seen as very limiting by 69% of the participants, despite the recent law reforms. In addition 78% of CSOs reported facing illegitimate restriction or attack by local or central government on a frequent basis. These findings show significant differences between the two Civicus Civil Society Index implementations, contrasting with the 63% that had reported only legitimate government interferences in 2005".* The following chart from CSI 2010 clearly shows the CSO perception towards the legal framework in which they operate.

FIGURE III.5.1 CSO EXPERIENCE OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK

LEGISLATION CONCERNING CIVIL SOCIETY IS...

(CSOS, 2009)
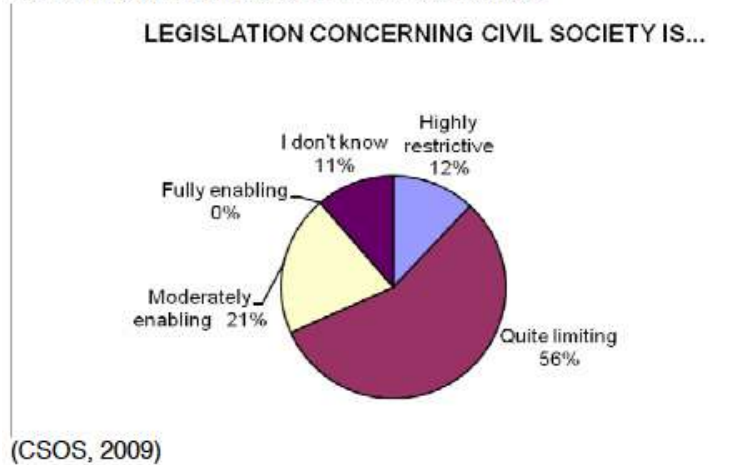
Since 2009, several human rights defenders faced prosecution and charges based on the Law on Fight Against Terrorism. This was also confirmed in the EC's 2011 Progress Report as *"Civil society organisations and human rights defenders often face prosecution and legal proceedings on charges of terrorist propaganda during demonstrations and protest meetings".* There were a series of arrests of protestors against the building of Hydro-Electric Power Plants in Trabzon, Hopa, and Erzurum on grounds of resisting the security-forces and on charges of terrorist propaganda.

2009 Needs Assessment Report stated: *"Associations and foundations are free to engage in advocacy activities and criticise the Government, but doing so still entails the possibility of legal sanction by the State. In particular, CSOs perceived as promoting a politically oppositional discourse against state ideology report that they are discriminated against by the authorities and are unofficially blacklisted".* The 2011 report re-affirms that the CSOs still continue to report such interventions. Right based CSOs and civil rights defenders-in particular CSOs working on human rights, LGBTT rights and Kurdish issue- report that they are more frequently faced with interferences from Governmental Institutions compared to non-right based CSOs According to the CSI 2010 report, 78% of CSOs report being subjected to frequent illegitimate interferences. Same report states that CSO perception of illegitimate government interferences shows regional differences. The CSOs in Mediterranean and Eastern Anatolia regions report much higher levels of government interference than the country average. *(See figure below from CSI Turkey 2010)*

FIGURE III.5.5 ILLEGITIMATE INTERFERENCES IN CSO ACTIVITIES BY REGION
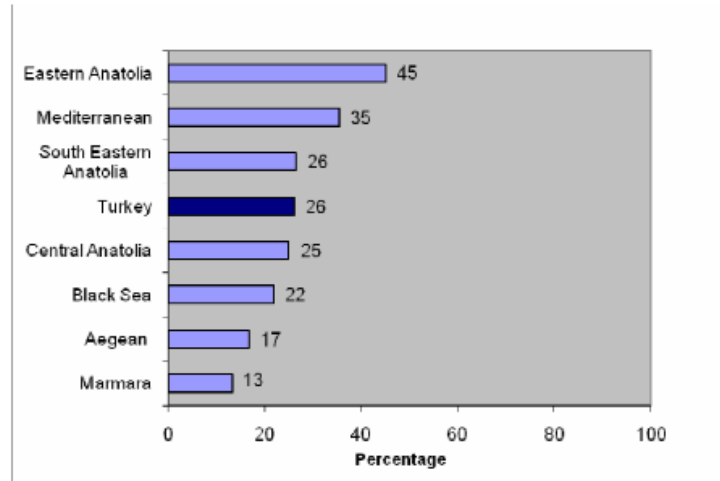
(CSOS, 2009)

As in 2009, membership in associations still require a Turkish residency permit and as the EC's 2011 Progress Report also highlights: *"more restrictive legislation applied to foreign associations, with the Ministry of Interior having to consult the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to allow the opening of a representation. Some foreign civil society organisations were rejected by or received no reply from the MoI without being given specific reasons."*

CSOs are considered as businesses by the MoF and hence are subject to pay same utility (electricity, heating, etc) rates as a factory. CSOs are exempt from profit / income tax on their ordinary fundraising activities, although tax is incurred on all economic activities.

As in 2009, the final decision for the awarding of public benefit status still rests with the Council of Ministers and the rules for selection, and the process is obscure. Organisations can only be able to receive public benefit (for associations) or tax exempt (for foundations) status only when and if Council of Ministers approves their application.   To date, only 410 associations (0.46%) and 237 foundations (5.17%) have been able to be granted these status.

The highly restrictive law on collection of aid is reported to be another major problem in raising funds. As mentioned in the 2009 study, government authorities are authorised to waive the obligation to gain permission for the collection of aid. However, it seems that this authority is not practiced too often since the number of organisations that have been given this power did not change since 2009 and is still 18.

1.4 Donors and funding opportunities

EU pre☐accession funds

As in 2009, the EU continues to be the most important and biggest international source of funding for CSOs in Turkey.

In the Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework for IPA 2011-2013 the following priorities for IPA support related with the civil society have been identified:

Horizontal priorities that will be supported as cross-cutting themes are participation of civil society, participation in EU programmes, a high degree of protection of the environment, mainstreaming of climate change considerations, equal opportunities for men and women, support to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups as well as the development of good neighbourly relations.

The MIPD 2011-2013 of the EC states that: *"The European Commission Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007-2008 and in the last Strategy Documents (2008, 2009 and 2010) underlined the importance of civil society being able to play its role in a participatory democracy. The "Civil Society Facility" (CSF), financed under both the IPA multi-beneficiary and the IPA national programmes, was set up as the tool to financially support the development of civil society. The CSF includes actions to strengthen freedom of expression, as it represents a basic precondition for a functioning democracy. An adequate legal framework allowing media to operate freely needs to be put in place. A network of technical assistance desks (TACSO) has been established in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This network became operational in autumn 2009. Also, Local Advisory Groups have been established consisting of representatives from the EU delegations, governments, civil society and other donors."*

With regards to sector objectives related with civil society, the MIPD 2011-2013 highlights the fifth objective under Justice, Home Affairs and Fundamental Rights. This fifth objective is *"to set up strong democratic institutions and civil society promoting pluralism and the values of European integration".* And the types of indicators identified to measure the development towards this objective were stated as follows:

- *Civil society development and civil society dialogue, democratisation, promotion of the values of the EU and of cultural diversity and protection and preservation of cultural heritage; development of democratic standards and structures, including capacity building of the Parliament and political parties; improved environment for civil society and strengthening the capacities of organised active citizens, more effective civic participation in policy processes at all levels, including a better legal framework for establishing, operating and funding civil society organisations; support provided to the sustainable development of grassroots civil society organisations and newly established organisations and strengthening, sustainability and activism of civil society organisations ensured.*
- *Fostered dialogue, communication and cooperation between Turkish civil society organisations and those in EU member states and candidate countries and increased awareness among civil society and population in Turkey about EU values, fundamental rights, policies and Turkey's EU accession process through improved provision of targeted EU information and communication.*

According to this Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework for IPA for the years 2011- 2013, Turkey will receive an indicative allocation of € 2616.9 million of pre-accession funds. The Commission aims to allocate indicatively around 2-5% of the overall assistance for the three years to civil society support.

As in 2009, funds for civil society are administered under the EC's Civil Society Facility which aims to increase the overall capacities, accountability and credibility of CSOs, to enhance CSOs' services and their role in the democratic process, to reinforce dialogue and to strengthen ties between CSOs within the region and with their counterparts in the EU, and to develop CSO's consultation towards citizens and public authorities.

An extensive and major civil society project to be implemented by a consortium of several CSOs (CSDC (STGM), TUSEV, IHOP, YADA, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, and Bilgi University CSO Centre) in Turkey will be starting in the last months of 2011 which will include various components including small-grants for public-civil society cooperation initiatives; research, policy development and pilot implementations of public-civil society cooperation mechanisms; civil society capacity building; research, mapping and support to networks; research on public perceptions towards civil society, etc. This is the largest direct grant provided to a consortium of CSOs in Turkey with a 7.365 million

EUR budget.

Furthermore, as in 2009, through the EIDHR, large scale global grants as well as Turkey-specific small grants (50.000-140.000 EUR) are continued to be offered for CSO activities contributing to the promotion and reinforcement of democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Overall, the EU grants and funding support is getting more known around Turkey by CSOs but it seems that the EU is seen to be the only possible donor and other donors are not known, especially by relatively smaller local CSOs.

Other international donors

As in 2009, the following funding programs, donors and civil society capacity building support organisations are still active in Turkey:

1. **Netherlands: MATRA Pre-Accession Program –** Within the overall remit of contributing to the further development of an open, pluralist, democratic society, firmly embedded in the rule of law in Central and Eastern Europe, this programme provides support for "twinning;" that is, direct cooperation between local NGO's and Dutch NGO's that offer support for projects carried out with and by their partners in Eastern or Central Europe and Turkey.

2. **Netherlands: MATRA-KAP** - small scale grants to a maximum of 15.000 EUR over 12 months, for CSO project in the fields of legislation and law, public administration, public order and police, information and media, human rights/minorities, environment**,** environmental authorities, labour & social policy, culture, welfare, health care, housing, education.

3. **Sweden: SIDA -** As of 2009, SIDA is supporting CSOs worldwide (including Turkey) through the agency of 15 Swedish framework NGOs. These "framework organisations" are of two types. 1. umbrella organisations, which prepare and pass on funding applications from their member organisations for SIDA funding. Member organisations then cooperate with organisations in developing countries. 2. organisations that develop and run their own development cooperation programmes and sign partnership agreements directly with CSOs in developing countries.

Within the overall aim of support to the continued democratization process and respect for human rights, as well as to contribute to the establishment of European common value systems in Turkey, SIDA support to civil society in Turkey focuses on improving rights for women, minority groups and disabled people. Particular prioritization is given to poor people in southeast Turkey, where the Kurds mainly live.

The Consulate General of Sweden's section for cooperation between Turkey and Sweden promotes contacts through cultural and academic exchange programmes, in which the Swedish Institute is among the participants. The different programmes are aimed at promoting Turkey's efforts towards EU membership; for example by increasing the mutual understanding of traditions, religion, culture and for equality and other areas.

4.   **German Foundations** (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Heinrich Böll Stiftung; Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; Friedrich Naumann Stiftung) also offer small grants for CSO projects promoting democracy and human rights. They each have their focus themes and tend not to overlap thematic areas, which they support. Their financial contributions come from state budget of Germany.

5.   **Other Embassies and Consulate-generals**: British, Finnish, Norwegian, Canadian, American, Japanese, Danish, and Belgium embassies as well consulate-generals offer small grants and civil society support for CSOs.

Semi-Public Funds

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) continue to provide funding opportunities for CSOs in a variety of social and economic development projects. RDAs under the coordination of the State Planning Agency are supported by the EU IPA program.

Government and Public funding

As in 2009, the government is not a regular funder of civil society in Turkey, and total government support of CSOs is relatively insignificant. Only a very small number of CSOs receive state resources, usually by means of project partnerships, rather than grant allocations or service contracts.

There are two public funding programmes from which CSOs could benefit from:

1. **Social Support Program:** In the context of the South-eastern Development Program (GAP), a flexible funding mechanism, Social Support Program (SODES) was developed in 2008 in order to meet the social needs in the region. Between 2008-2010, a total of 516 CSO projects were funded with a total of 64.686.785 TL. The budget spared for 2010 has been 150.000.000 TL and for 2011 200.000.000 TL.

2. **Grants for Associations:** As of 2010, a special grant programme for associations was established under the MoI to be coordinated by the DoA. The 2010 programme priorities were as follows:

1. Developing a civil society understanding and awareness,
2. Public-civil society dialogue,
3. Training, cultural and social projects towards children, youth, women and disadvantaged groups,
4. Protection of historical and cultural values,
5. Social entrepreneurship,
6. Increasing CSOs active participation into public decision-making mechanisms

A total of 115 association received grants under this programme.

The 2011 priorities were:

1. Developing a civil society understanding and awareness,
2. Public-civil society dialogue,
3. Training, cultural and social projects towards children, youth, women and disadvantaged groups,
4. Protection of historical and cultural values,
5. Public and environmental health protection
6. Increasing CSOs active participation into public decision-making mechanisms

Although such a funding programme is accepted as an important improvement by the civil society, the trust of civil society towards the selection and dispersion of these grants seems to be quite low. For example one of the evaluation criteria mentioned in the relevant legal directive is the "appropriate opinion" of the governorship with no mention regarding the criteria of this "appropriateness". The total budget and minimum-maximum grant amounts are not announced widely. Furthermore, although the names of projects and the organisations are published, the total grant amounts received by each CSO are not.

Business and private sources of CSO support

The majority of the corporations mentioned in the 2009 study continue to provide grants and support for civil society activities however, due to the economic crisis, the CSOs complain that there has been a severe decrease in the amounts dispersed.

According to the CSI 2010 study, the private sector-civil society relations, (which examined the general attitude of the private sector towards civil society actors; the level of development of ideas and actions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the range of CSOs that receive support from the private sector) appear to be a weak but improving area that has much future potential, as was the case in the previous CSI implementation in 2005.

The report states that the "CSO survey participants find that private sector is generally uninterested in civil society actors (67%). Major companies show limited concern about the social and environmental impacts of their operations and CSR activities (48%), and only a very limited range of CSOs benefit from CSR activities (75%).

According to the CSI 2011 study, although the CSOs do accept that the companies are taking a more active role in supporting CSOs, they lack strategies and mechanisms. The report states: *"CSO partners and projects are selected and supported on an ad-hoc basis, generally with the advice of public relations/corporate communications consultants, commonly funded from the companies' PR or marketing budgets. Decisions are rarely made according to any set guidelines and the practice is often treated as a 'sponsorship' rather than a 'grant'. As such, corporate funds are accessible only for small and selective groups of CSOs. The unfavorable fiscal framework for donations and grant giving appears as another factor affecting CSR and corporate philanthropy negatively".*

The focus group participants and several civil society and business representatives who were interviewed underlined the fact that the corporations are seeking organisations, which are transparent and accountable, but the majority of CSOs in Turkey either lack these characteristics or the necessary skills/resources to be transparent and accountable.

Another important factor, which was raised during the focus group meetings, was the fact that the corporations tend not to support projects that they believe are political (e.g human rights, women's political participation, minority rights, etc), and hence are not providing support for rights-based CSOs. They tend to support and work with more service-oriented organisations.

1.5 Government mechanisms for civil society – government cooperation and the policy framework determining government – civil society relations & 1.6 Government (local and national) institutional capacities for engaging civil society

The 2011 study re-affirms the findings of the 2009 report under this heading: "There are no concrete government structures or other institutional mechanisms in Turkey to facilitate regular contact and coordination with civil society. There is also no overarching legal framework defining the possible forms that cooperation between government and civil society might take, as well as the broad roles and responsibilities both sectors should fulfill vis-à-vis each other. In a similar way, central government has

not developed a policy or a strategic approach to its relations with CSOs and to its possible role in supporting the strengthening of civil society".

During the individual interviews and focus group meetings, both the CSO and the government representatives accepted the fact that there is an improvement in government-civil society relations. The shared perception was that the government came to at least recognize the civil society as an actor, even if it is only a discourse change and on paper and not sincerely aimed at the attempts to call for civil society for consultation. The EC's 2011 progress report also recognizes this growing awareness. The CSOs' participation in policy commissions is increasing and in some cases continue to be fruitful. However, in most cases, the attempts only stay at the first levels of participation: providing information or hearing through general consultations.

Some concrete examples provided by CSOs were the law on discrimination, law on protection of the environment, and the General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women (KSGM) employment commission.

The consultations are made either in a very broad gathering of various civil society organisations regardless of expertise areas (such as the dialogue meetings of the MoEU) or with relatively smaller number of CSOs that are not necessarily experts in the field (KSGM employment commission). It is important to note that the MoEU is searching for new formats and ways to implement in the dialogue meetings to increase efficiency.

CSOs major complaint was the fact that although they were called in to participate in such consultation meetings, they did not have much affect on the results, and cannot monitor the proceeding steps. Some CSOs report that in some cases, their mere participation to such meetings have been accepted and publicized by the relevant government offices as the organisations' support for the government policies. Furthermore, CSOs report that although the meetings are not highly participatory but mere hearing sessions, the government institution, can legitimize their efforts and policies by claiming that the CSOs were invited and participated to take part in the process.

Another complaint of some CSOs was the fact that in many cases, the government (local and central) consults only trade unions and/or business and professional organisations when claiming that they have consulted the civil society.

Hence, it is obvious that the Regulation for Procedures and Guidelines in Preparing Legislation (2006) that establishes the right of CSOs to participate in the decision-making process at both national and local levels, in the absence of concrete mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of this right, CSO participation in policy dialogue and the legislative drafting process takes place infrequently in an *ad hoc* and often uncoordinated manner. This is in line with the findings of the 2009 report.

At the local government level, as in 2009, the CSOs who might sit in the City Councils and or other commissions lack voting rights. Hence, they are only viewed as consultants and their impact on the overall decisions and planning are very limited.

However, the CSO representatives highlighted the agenda setting role of these commissions and councils as still positive.

The relevant article in the law on municipalities that gives responsibility to municipalities in assisting and supporting civil society organisations is only available for CSOs, which have the public benefit status or tax exemption status.

Last but not least, the CSI 2010 study concludes: *"there have been some drawbacks in government-civil society relations over the years, largely due to the failure to implement recent legal reforms. Thus, government-civil society relations, be it in terms of autonomy, dialogue or support, offer a more pessimistic portrait than in the previous CSI Study".*

One major component of the CSO Consortium project mentioned above, which will be executed by TUSEV and CSDC (STGM), will be concentrated on making research, propose and pilot participation mechanisms on both local and national/central level.

1.7 Public perceptions and support of civil society and its various segments

The Civic Engagement dimension in the CSI 2010 study, received the lowest score (31%) among the five core dimensions of the CSI, showing the greatest weakness and need for improvement (TUSEV 2010).

Same report states: *"low levels of membership, volunteering, political activism and community engagement reveal that a majority of Turkish citizens remain rather disconnected from the civil society movement. Percentages of citizens that are **active members** of social and political organisations are 4.5% and 5.3% respectively. The participation is even lower where **volunteering** is concerned: only 2.5% of citizens volunteer for social organisations, followed by a slightly higher rate of political volunteering at 4.2% (WVS, 1999 and 2007)".*

The difference between different regions of Turkey in terms of civic engagement should also be noted. One example is the difference in the number of members in associations that can be found in the following table (TUSEV 2010):

TABLE III.1.3 Regional distribution of association members

Region	Population	% of total population	Association members	% of total association members
Marmara	21,044,783	30	2,597,364	38
Central Anatolia	11,459,292	16	1,922,937	28
Aegean	8,585,932	12	815,222	12
Black Sea	7,372,798	10	648,378	10
Mediterranean	9,050,691	13	502,825	7
Eastern Anatolia	5,74,243	8	167,191	3
South-eastern Anatolia	7,350,752	10	156,963	2
TOTAL	70,608,491	100	6,811,147	100

(TSA and DoA, 2008)

Total number of association members in Turkey in 2010 was 8.038.536, that is only 11.07% of the population in Turkey. This means that the average number of members for each association in Turkey is only 93 people.

The following two figures, which present the questionnaire results conducted during this study also proves that the number of members in a majority of CSOs are fewer than 100. When active members are concerned, it further falls down to between 11-25 people.

Number of Members

- Under 100 — 58%
- 101-250 — 21%
- 251-500 — 5%
- 501-750 — 2%
- 751-1000 — 0%
- More than 1001 — 14%

Number of Active Members

- Btw 1-5 — 8%
- Btw 6-10 — 15%
- Btw 11-25 — 28%
- Btw 26-50 — 17%
- Btw 50-100 — 17%
- More than 100 — 15%
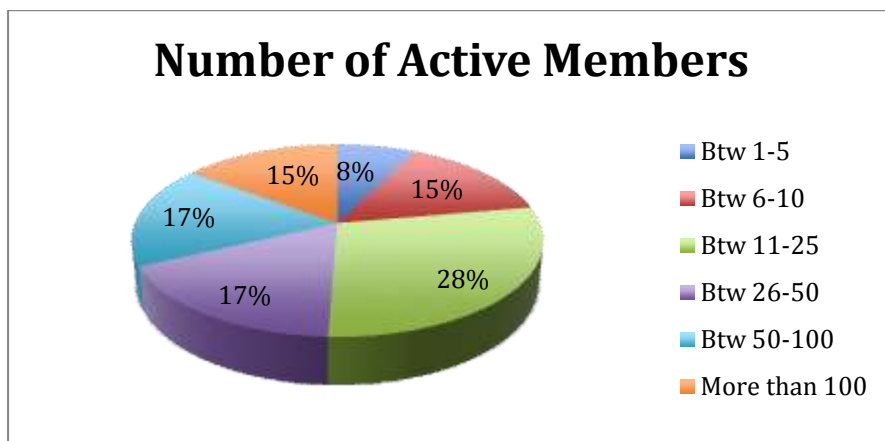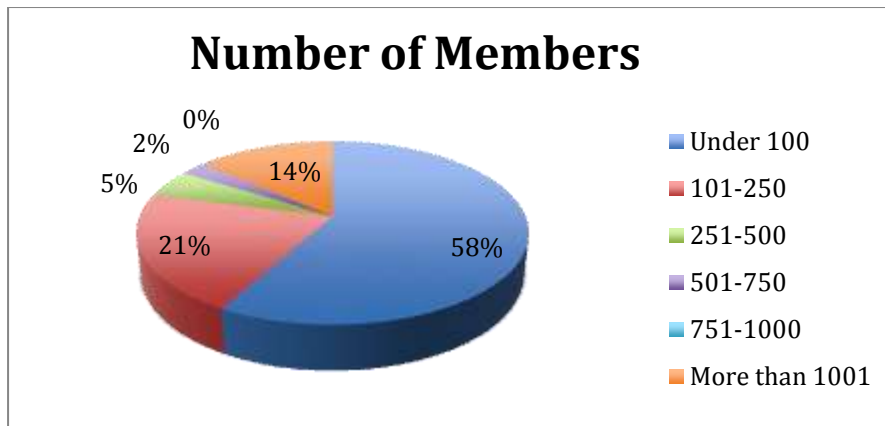
According to a study made in 2010 (YADA)**,** women make up only 10.4% of membership and 14.4% of board members of CSOs in Turkey. Women's membership in associations is also very low compared to men. Only 16.87% of members of associations in Turkey are women (DoA).

According to a research made in 2006, (ARI-Infakto) people living in urban areas, men, the 26-34 age group and people above a certain socio-economic status show higher levels of participation in civil society activities. The CSI 2010 study, states that *"this was also confirmed at the regional consultation meetings where CSOs were criticised for appealing to an 'urban' and 'elite' segment of society and remaining rather detached from the rest of the population"*.

The CSO representatives participated in the focus groups conducted during the needs assessment study underlined the fact that the public perception towards civil society has been negatively affected by the court cases and persecutions held against various civil society members and organisations (e.g Deniz Feneri, Çagdas Yasami Destekleme Dernegi, LOSEV, CEV) during the last 2 years. There have been some organisations claiming that they have lost many members due to this fact. They thought that this could be one explanation of the considerable decrease in the total of numbers in associations in Turkey in 2009[1].   The same development was seen as an opportunity for some CSO representatives due to the fact that while the number of members of CSOs that are more service-oriented (or philanthropic) the number of members in rights-based CSOs is increasing.

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[1] According to DoA statistics, the number of total members in associations fell down by 173.901 people in 2009 (compared to 2008) while the number of associations continue to increase by 3654 in the same year (compared to 2008).

35% of the respondent CSOs to the questionnaire conducted during this study claimed that one of their top three problems is the weak voluntary culture at local and national level and a further 37% of them claimed that it is lack of active volunteer support.

Some positive developments should also be noted. The number of young people interested in civil society and searching ways to engage with civil society seems to be increasing. This was confirmed both by civil society representatives participated in the focus groups, or in the individual interviews but also by Bilgi University CSO Centre. Although largely positive, the fact that the majority of these young people are engaging with the civil society with a career oriented motivation rather than an activist one was voiced as an important concern to most. Hence, the civil society, and the capacity building organisations are expected to work on this opportunity vs. risk.

Another development, which although still small in scale, is immensely important, was voiced by several CSOs during the focus group meetings. One LGBT organisation stated that their member profiles started to change, and their heterosexual members are increasing in number. Furthermore, for the first time in years, in 2011, they now have a member from Trabzon (which normally known to has a conservative community). A similar development was also voiced by a women's rights organisation whose members were mostly religious Muslim women. They have stated that the number of members who do not wear the headscarf has been increasing in recent years. These limited but critically important development suggests that as civil society is gaining visibility and rights-based organisations are getting more successful in setting an agenda, the relations between the subjects of discrimination and/or rights violations and the non-subjects are on the way to become "normalized".

Within the context of the CSO Consortium project mentioned above, YADA is planning to make in-depth research regarding public perceptions towards civil society.

2. CSO ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITIES

2.1 Overview of the civil society community in Turkey

2.1.1 Types of organisations, size and presence on the ground & 2.1.3. Type of activity (e.g. service delivery, advocacy, self-help etc.) and sector of operation

According to data obtained from state Departments for Associations at the MoI, currently (October 2011) there are approximately 89,060 associations and 4585 foundations (additionally, 285 foundations and 162 religious-minority foundations and 1 artisans foundation established during the Ottoman period)[2] active in Turkey.

There is no legal structure that unifies non-profit/voluntary organisations in Turkey. Instead they are often structured as associations and foundations. These are two different entities that are subject to different legislation and regulated by different public agencies, yet they show great similarity in their functions. In recent years, the lines between these two structures have blurred significantly, leading to the emergence

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[2] There are four different foundation "types" governed by the Law on Foundations: "old" Muslim foundations established in the Ottoman period (286), minority foundations established by non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman period (162), and "new" foundations based on cash endowments in the period after the founding of the Turkish Republic (4585).

of association-like foundations and foundation-like associations (TUSEV 2011).

Civil society organisations are active in all of Turkey's 81 provinces, but as in 2009, their distribution is still very uneven. There is a marked concentration of CSOs in urban areas, especially the three largest cities, Istanbul (20.14% of associations and 30.03% of foundations), Ankara (9.51% of associations and 16.80% of foundations) and İzmir (5.47% of associations and 4.47% of foundations).

Geographical Distribution of Associations in Turkey
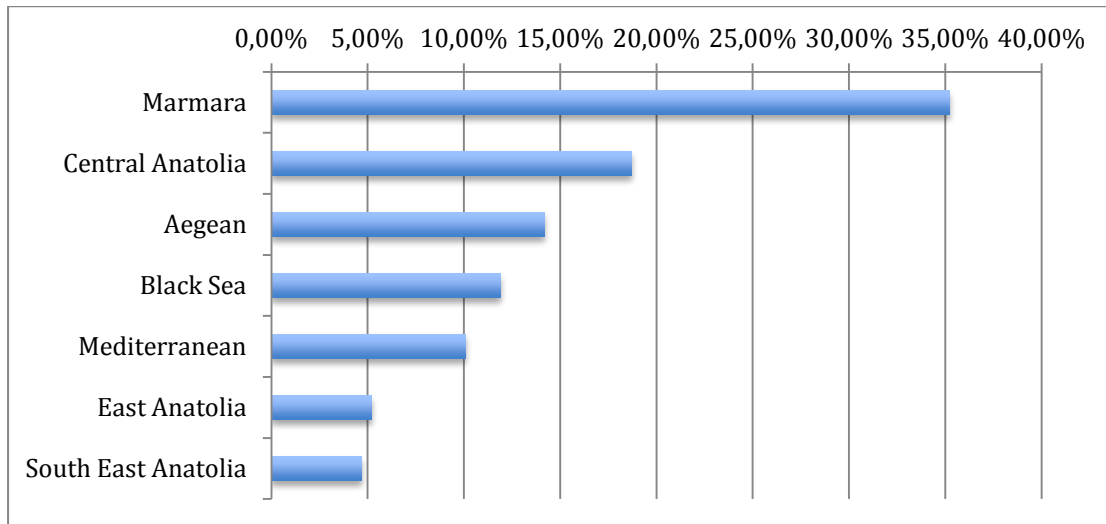

Source: DoA, 2010

CSO representation in eastern, north-eastern, and southern Anatolian regions is particularly weak. The urban concentration of foundations is more conspicuous than that of associations.

CSOs tend to be more active in social services and solidarity, making advocacy and policy oriented activities less common. Of all the associations in Turkey, 18.1% work in delivering religious services, 14.3% are sports associations, and 13.7% social solidarity organisations, followed by professional solidarity associations at 10% and development and construction associations at 9.5%. This means that about 65% of associations do not work on policy issues but rather on delivering social services and on solidarity (DoA, 2008).

Foundations have a similar tendency toward social aid (56.1%), education (47.5%) and health (21.8%) as their most common areas of activity. Yet the increase of activity and visibility among advocacy oriented CSOs (in areas such as women's rights, human rights, consumer protection, student and youth issues) is notable (TUSEV 2010).

CSOs and individuals participated in this study stated that the number of rights-based, advocacy organisations are increasing both in numbers but more importantly in their impact.

The following table illustrates the target groups of associations in Turkey. It is still not very common for CSOs to strategically identify a specific target group; instead they claim to work for all humanity, presenting a rather philanthropic approach.
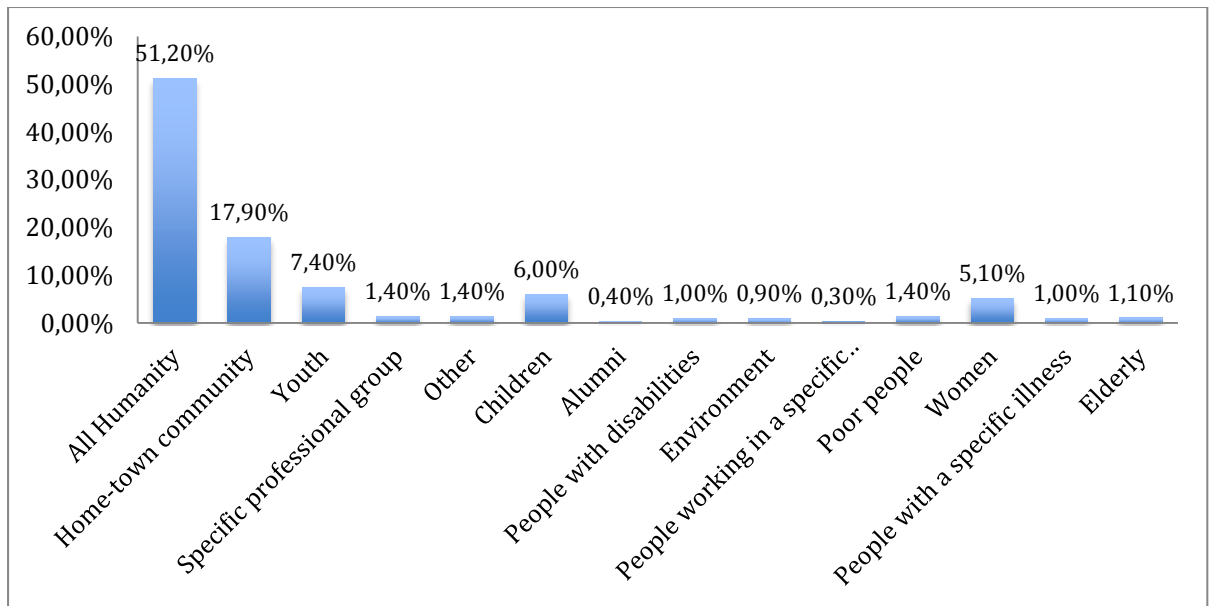
In addition to the concentration of their work areas, types of activities also reveal that CSOs work heavily in social areas. The top three CSO activities are organizing social gatherings (66.1%), dinner organisations (63.1%) and meeting celebrities (50.1%)(YADA, 2010). The findings of this study are also similar. The questionnaire respondent CSOs stated that holding meetings (18%) or participation in symposiums (24%) are the most common methods promotional activities they implement. Hence the methods are still quite traditional and conventional.

Types of Promotion Activities

18%
10%
11%
10%
13%
3%
24%
6%
5%

- Local/national level meetings
- Promotion/adv. Through media/other com. Tools
- Partiipation in national/local TV programs
- Street action/activities
- Educational institution visits
- Attraction of famous individuals to the organisation
- Participation in congress/semposiums bringing CSOs together
- Stands and introduction activities at public places such as shopping malls
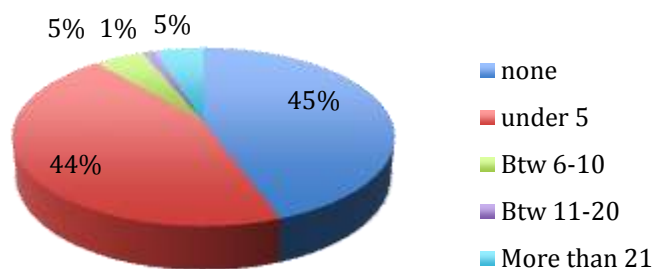- Other

2.1.2 Human resources and technical skills

Some findings of the CSI 2010 study (TUSEV 2010) regarding human resources of CSOs in Turkey are the following:

- 57% of CSOs do not have paid staff, while many organisations' human resources generally consist of 6-20 volunteers.

- The majority of CSOs are not satisfied with their human resources: 71% of those that have volunteers and 85% of those that have paid staff report having insufficient human resources to realise their goals (CSOS, 2009).
- Over half of the paid staff positions se positions (60%) are of an administrative or financial nature, 15% are in areas of expertise and only 8.5% are professional managers. In addition, the percentage of foundations with paid staff (71.2%) is much higher than the percentage of associations (27.2%).

The 45% of questionnaire respondents of this study also confirmed that they do not have any paid staff. 44% of them were able to recruit between 5-10 people. The 74% of respondents stating that they have 1-10 staff clearly shows the voluntary nature of the human resources.

Number of Paid Staff

5% 1% 5%	
45%	■ none
44%	■ under 5
	■ Btw 6-10
	■ Btw 11-20
	■ More than 21

Number of Staff

1% 1% 8%	■ Btw 1-10
8%	■ Btw 11-20
8%	■ Btw 21-50
74%	■ Btw 51-100
	■ More than 100
	■ none
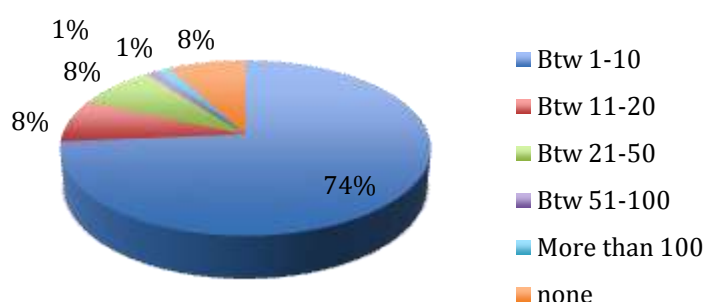
The technological resources seem to be better than the human resources. Most CSOs appear to have regular access to technological resources such as telephone, computer and the Internet. A detailed look at CSO offices shows that most are equipped with a desktop computer, a DSL Internet connection, television and phone (TUSEV 2010).

TABLE III.2.2 Office infrastructures of CSOs

	%
Desktop Computer	78,1
Internet Connection	72,7
Television	66,4
Fax	65,8
Phone	63,1
Multipurpose room	55,1
Projector	28,5
Laptop Computer	27,7
Meeting Room	23,2

(YADA, 2010)

According to DoA statistics, 50% of the associations in Turkey (with notable regional differences) used e-association for their administrative work with public institutions in 2010. This is a great increase when the 5% rate in 2006 is considered (TUSEV 2010).

Another DoA statistic shows the rates in computer ownership and their regional distribution.

FIGURE III.2.8 REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ASSOCIATIONS THAT OWN COMPUTERS
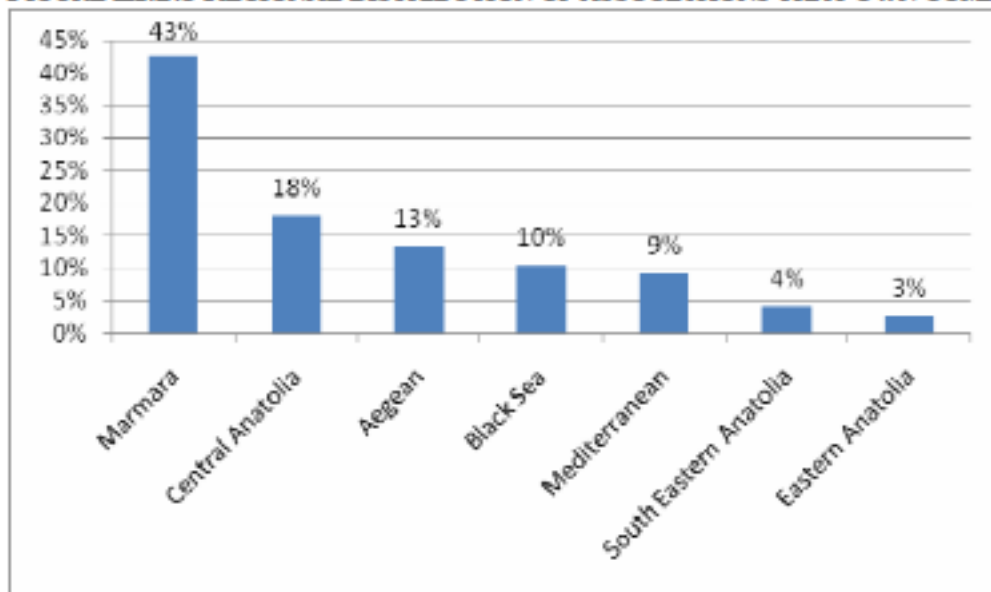
(DoA, 2009)

While in some regions of Turkey (eastern and south eastern Anatolia) only 3-4% of associations own a computer, in Marmara region this rate increases to 43%, which is nearly half of all CSOs.

The following chart presents the rates for the ownership of technological tools by the CSOs that respondent to the questionnaire conducted within the context of this study:
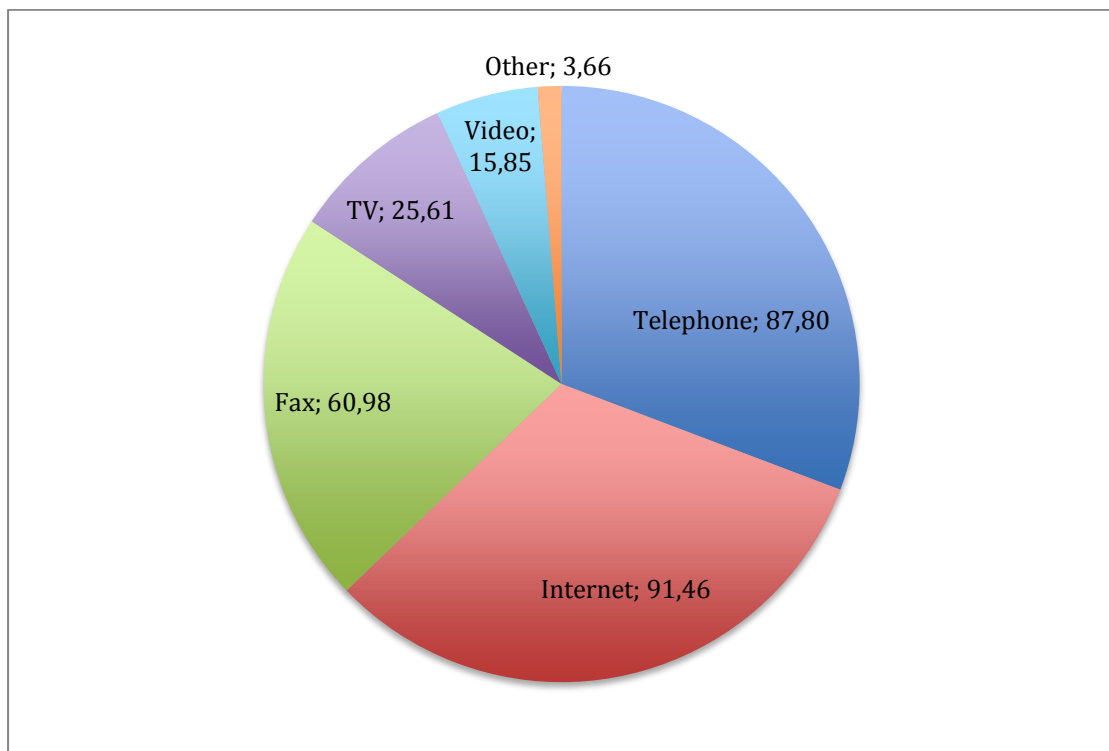
Re-affirming the findings of the CSI 2010 (TUSEV) study, the majority of the CSOs have

access to telephone and internet facilities.

A majority of the CSO in the focus group meetings highlighted the fact that the majority of the CSOs do not have the technical skills and capacity to effectively collaborate with volunteers/members and this was further emerged in the questionnaire results. 14% of the respondent CSOs stated that one of their top three problems is inadequate volunteer support, which shows a lack of ability to increase the active participation of their volunteers/members. The study findings present a link between lack of effective and democratic internal governance of CSOs with the lack of ability to increase participation of members.

The CSI 2010 (TUSEV) study also underlines the fact that there is an increasing need for institutionalisation and a lack of knowledge and experience on initiating internal governance processes. The major weaknesses mentioned in this study were: CSO's internal governance structures, only procedural elections, president-oriented and top down decision-making structures and conflicts of interest.

2.1.4 Strategic strengths of CSOs in Turkey

Re-affirming the findings of the 2009 needs assessment study, in 2011, CSOs still report that the strategic planning capacities of CSOs in Turkey are very weak. Majority of CSOs are still managed on a daily basis, with key decisions (typically restricted to routine operational concerns and project activities) taken by managing boards only a short-time before the event.

As in 2009, CSO representatives are concerned about governance bodies – boards of directors and assemblies – functioning poorly and/or provide little in the way of strategic leadership for management and staff. As noted above, many CSOs are in effect "one-person organisations," in which all leadership and management capacities (in indeed most other administrative capabilities) are concentrated in one person.

Only 17% of the CSO respondents to the questionnaire conducted stated that authority is delegated to the members/volunteers. The authority still rests either with the chairperson or the board of the organisation. One of the criticisms raised in this direction is the fact that the civil society in Turkey lacks democratic, non-hierarchical governance systems and is only replicating the management structures/systems of businesses.

2.1.5 Analytical capacities

The low level of analytical capacities identified in the 2009 study is still a fact and pose as another major problem related with the lack of strategic planning. Social analysis is not utilized by CSOs in Turkey creating another barrier for legitimizing the policies and demands of organisations due to the lack of relation with their constituencies.

However, there seem to be a small increase towards being aware of the need for analytical work, especially among the rights-based advocacy organisations. %9 of the CSO respondents to the questionnaire stated that they have been dealing with research activities and 8% of them stated that they have been disseminating publications related with their findings.

The gap between the think-tank and the advocacy organisations is still continuing in 2011.

2.1.6 Relationships with other actors –networking and partnerships

The level of cooperation and networking between CSOs seem to be rising in Turkey. The CSO representatives participated in the focus group meetings, as well as individuals interviewed reported that the awareness and ability of CSOs in being able to work together is developing rapidly. This relationship is (as in 2009) mostly in the form of informal sector-based, ad-hoc and issue-based initiatives and/or platforms.

59.75% of the questionnaire respondents reported that one of their major partners in their activities is other CSOs in Turkey.

The CSI 2010 study states: *"Of the organisations surveyed, 82.9%had met with and 75.4% had shared information with at least one organisation in the past three months.* The following figure from the same study illustrates these relations:

FIGURE III.2.1 SECTORAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION
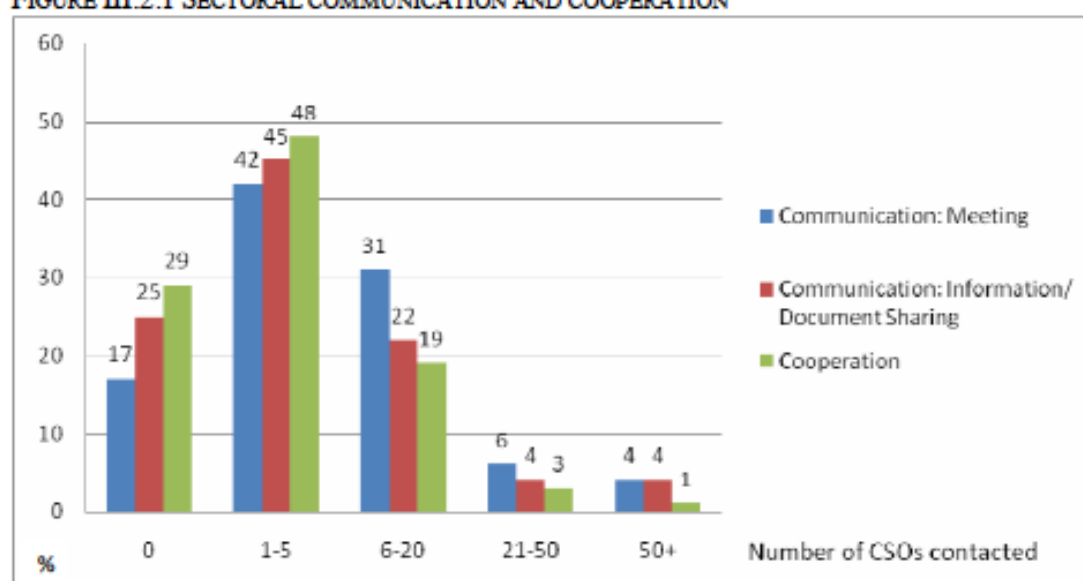
(CSOS, 2009)

The advisory committee of the CSI 2010 study pointed towards the fact that a *"large group of CSOs had only been in contact with a maximum of five organisations in recent months, indicating that large networks and multi-partnerships are not very common in the sector".*

This developing trend seems to be negatively affected by the political polarizations exist in Turkey. The identity politics that were already in affect for some years recently deepened the polarization and the civil society – as some respondents have put it - seems to be in crisis in this respect.

One important weakness in terms of CSO-CSO collaboration seems to be the cooperation between CSOs working in different areas/fields. The few examples of such cooperation and dialogue (between some women's and environment organisations) proved to be very fruitful and effective and opened up new fields of work/concentration for both movements. However, generally the organisations tend to work with CSOs working in their field only and hence lacking the new realms and approaches the other might bring.

Another weakness of CSOs in Turkey is cooperation and networking on international level. According to the CSI 2010 (TUSEV) study *58% of CSO survey participants did not*

share any documents or information while 63% did not engage in any form of cooperation with an international counterpart. Similarly, only 28% of CSOs reported being a member of an international network or umbrella organisation (CSOS, 2009).

The regional differences in networking on the international level are quite obvious, Istanbul and Ankara being the two major cities with higher rates of international networking. The focus group participants of the study reported that one of the major reasons for this gap lies with the human resources, Istanbul and Ankara CSOs being more able to recruit voluntary or professional people speaking other languages. The civil society dialogue programme plans to support this need, by providing translation service for CSOs.

The general trend regarding relations between CSOs and other key not-for-for profit actors, such as trade unions, vocational chambers, and political parties did not change much. They seem to show little enthusiasm to work with CSOs, mainly because they view CSOs as powerless and therefore as more or less irrelevant. This assessment also impacts negatively on CSOs in their relations with the mainstream media, to which they generally face difficulties in gaining proper access. The political polarization of the media is another difficulty for CSOs' cooperation.

One of the major components of the CSO Consortium project mentioned above will be concentrating on networks and platforms in which it is planned to come up with mapping studies and support to networks and coalitions.

2.1.7 Material and financial stability and resilience & 2.1.8 Organisational sustainability

According to the CSI 2010 (TUSEV) study, *"almost 79% of CSOs do not find their financial resources to be sufficient, which shows a continuing trend over the years. CSOs place lack of financial resources at the top of their weaknesses (YADA, 2010) and perceive their first and foremost need to be financial support, channeling their energy and time to generate more income for their activities."*

This needs assessment study also presents similar findings: more than 70% of CSO questionnaire respondents reported that one of their most important three problems is the lack of financial resources.

CSI 2010 study continues to state: *"organisations carry out their activities with rather minimal finances. Almost half of CSOs (44.6%) have an annual income below 10,000 TL (5,000 euro) while a significant group (15.7%) have less than 2,000 TL (1,000 euros) per year. Foundations enjoy much greater annual incomes on average (386,312 TL) than do associations (45,961 TL) (YADA, 2010)".*

FIGURE III.2.4 CSO's ANNUAL INCOMES
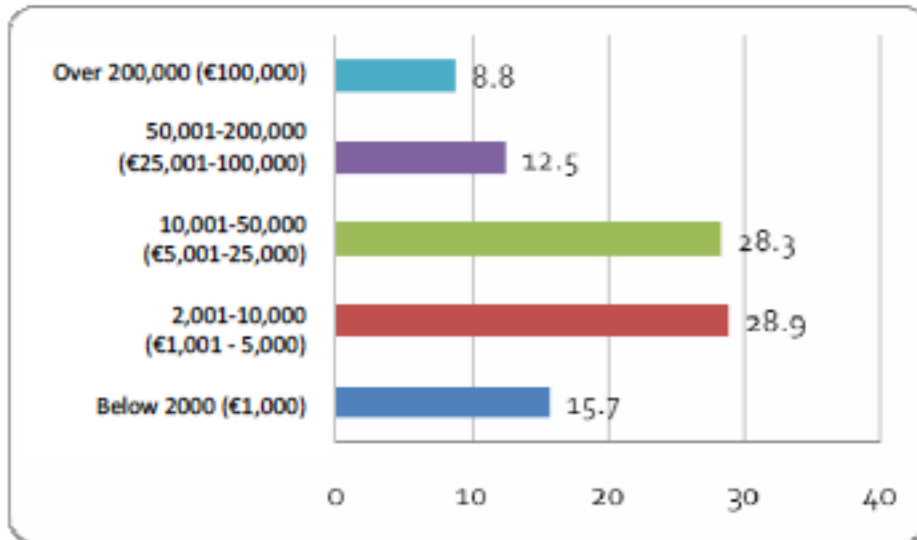
(YADA, 2010)

The below chart presents the responses of CSOs to the questionnaire conducted within this needs assessment study:
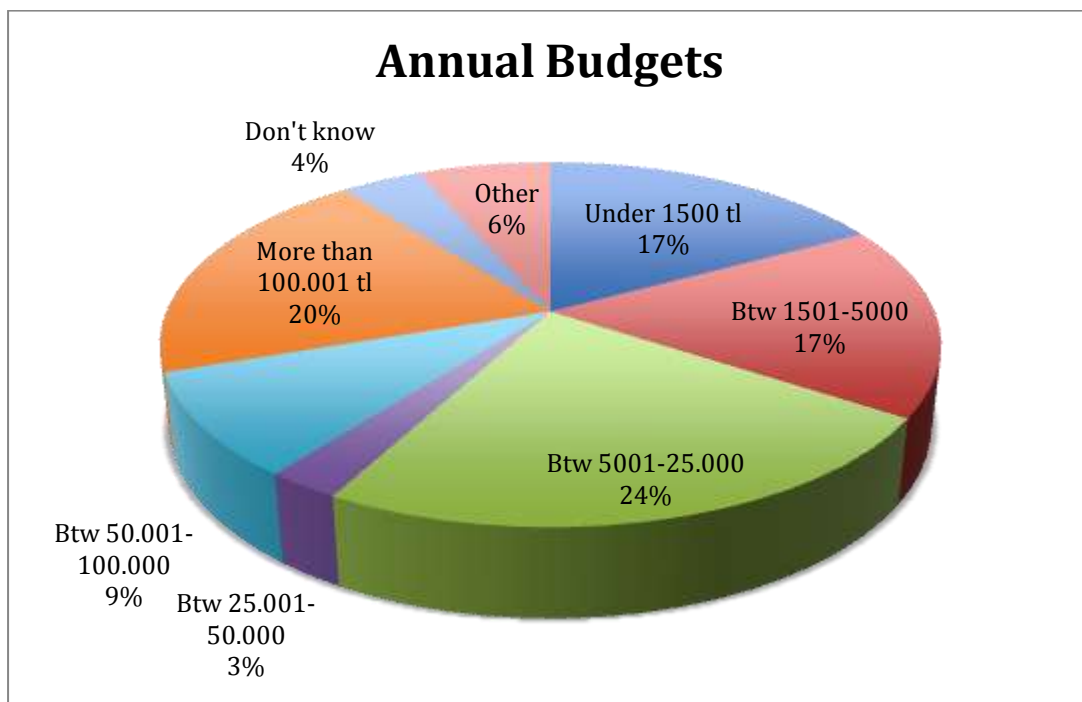
As can be seen, 17% of the respondents reported that their annual budgets are under 1500 TL and another 17% as being between 1501 and 5000 TL.

CSI 2010 study consultation participants underline the issue of sustainability rather than small amounts of income, criticising the project-oriented fundraising methods that are common in the sector. This was also one of the major criticisms stated by the participants of this needs assessment study.

The lack of knowledge of fundraising and financial management, as well as the fact that some major CSOs absorb most of the local donations that are available, were counted

among some of the causes of the problem. Lack of mechanisms to direct individual and corporate donations to smaller and less visible CSOs was also mentioned. Although there have been some developments such as new local grant programmes and mechanisms such as community foundations, their impact is yet to be seen (TUSEV 2010).

3. CIVIL SOCIETY MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES

3.1 Milestone achievements and impacts in the country

As also stated in the 2009 study, women's movement in promoting women's rights was cited as a good-example in terms of milestone CSO achievements in the country. The reform to the penal code, and civil code are still mentioned as major results of successful campaigning. Furthermore, the ability of women's rights CSOs in establishing, and sustaining ad-hoc advocacy platforms/initiatives, their ability to act quickly and effectively, and their increasing activity in different regions of the country (both in terms of establishment of local organisations and their scope of activity) were mentioned as important acquisitions.
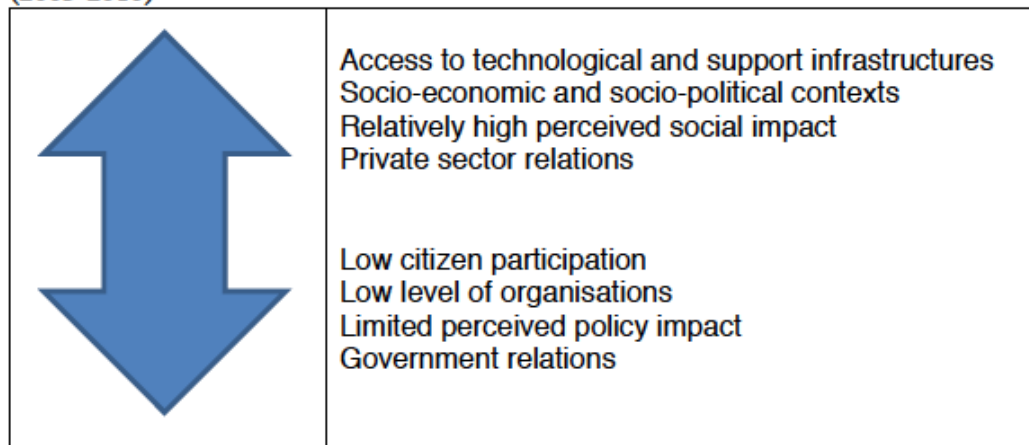
Although still on a limited level, rights-based CSOs have been gaining further visibility, with increased media coverage both on local and national levels. The rise of and increase in social media tools and mediums provide an effective visibility and space for human rights organisations. Initiatives such as "Say stop to Racism and Nationalism" (33.597 facebook members), Initiative for Conscientious Objection (with 6000 facebook members), Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP) and its electronic newsletter Izlem (reaching to more than 4000 individuals) are all effective in setting a human rights agenda and raise public awareness of issues concerning human rights and democracy.

Another very important civil society initiative since 2009 was the struggle against HES (Hydroelectric Power Plants). According to most, this movement has been one of the most important civil society opposition as well as a new experiential space for political criticism. Rather than carrying a centrally coordinated nature, this movement has a de-centralized approach. It is a successful and strong collaboration of local village initiatives with platforms of city-based environment activists (such as the Blacksea Uprising Platform, the Sisterhood/Brotherhood of Streams Platform, Turkish Water Assembly, etc). Using a variety of creative actions and tools (street-protests, law-suits, social media, documentaries, street-art, etc) the struggle is aiming to remind everyone of the public ownership of natural resources such as water through the perspective of social justice. For many, these initiatives has been successfully refreshing and re-establishing the bond between rural and urban, proving its essential strength. In so doing, the struggle against HES, has created a new space, a new approach to and a new breath to activism in Turkey which needs to be examined more and learnt from by other CSOs.

In addition to the above mentioned milestones and developments within civil society in Turkey, the CSI 2010 study findings show that there were improvements in "access to technological and support infrastructures", "socio-economic and socio-political contexts", "relatively high perceived social impact" and "private sector relations".

The following figure from CSI 2010 study illustrates the comparison of civil society strengths and weaknesses over time (2005-2010) in Turkey:

FIGURE IV.1.1 COMPARISON OF CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OVER TIME (2005-2010)

Access to technological and support infrastructures
Socio-economic and socio-political contexts
Relatively high perceived social impact
Private sector relations

Low citizen participation
Low level of organisations
Limited perceived policy impact
Government relations

3.2 Challenges faced by the CSO community in the past – factors hindering impact

Illustrated in the above figure, according to the CSI 2010 study, *"insufficient citizen participation and weak organisational structures remain as major challenges for civil society in Turkey. In addition to these main weaknesses, CSOs' impact, along with relations with the government, is perceived to have worsened".*

In both the CSI 2010 study and also in this Needs Assessment study, respondent civil society representatives placed **lack of citizen participation** in civil society as second among their most pressing concerns (following lack of financial resources). There is a common need to develop their capacities in increasing number of members, collaborating with volunteers, and mobilizing volunteers for action.

Reiterating the 2009 needs assessment finding, it can be stated that although the public acceptance and understanding of civil society is growing, generally speaking, *"CSOs are poorly supported by the general public and citizens are still reluctant to support CSO activities. CSOs generally do insufficient to communicate with the public, to research and address constituency needs, engage the community and encourage participation in their programming and activities."*

Regarding the **organisational level**, the CSOs are functioning with *"insufficient levels of institutionalisation, problematic governance structures, and insufficient resources and relationships" (CSI 2010).* In a large number of CSOs, participation levels are low, democratic governance mechanisms, accountability and transparency procedures are not practiced at all or do not function properly. Furthermore, *"CSOs report that values such as equal opportunities, labour standards and environmental standards are rarely put down on paper and shared with the general public in a transparent manner, leaving their practice open to misuse and abuse"* (CSI 2010).

To continue with the **organisational structure**, it can be stated that although there is an improvement in collaboration and networking among the civil society actors, there is still a significant proportion of CSOs who do not have any contact with other CSO actors. Furthermore, CSOs who do cooperate, tend do it only with a small group of organisations with no effort to extend outside of those networks. Hence the ability to

act on common ground is still quite weak, directly weakening their impact on public policy through advocacy.

Despite some milestone efforts of rights-based CSOs mentioned above (women, environment, human rights, additionally minorities, and LGBT), as in 2009, civil society is still under performs in **influencing public policy**. On the one side, CSOs "*tend to be more active in social services and solidarity, making advocacy and policy oriented activities less common. About 65% of associations do not work on policy issues but rather on delivering social services and on solidarity (DoA, 2008). Foundations have a similar tendency toward social aid (56.1%), education (47.5%) and health (21.8%) as their most common areas of activity*" (CSI 2010). On the other hand, a significant portion of CSOs that are prepared to engage in influencing public policy, do not possess the resources nor skills for advocacy.

When the **government and civil society relations** are concerned, the relations seem to be worsened in CSOs' perception since 2009. The legal framework continue to be very limited; the civil society did not find what they were expecting from the legal reforms and participation mechanisms, which started to be established since early 2000s. As in 2009, the CSO representatives state that viable participation/consultation mechanisms for working with government/public are either absent, or ineffective and obscure.

3.3. Challenges and Potential Role of Tacso 2 on Overcoming These Challenges .

Following the needs assessment initial findings, TACSO Turkey team organized a LAG meeting to discuss the findings, the challenges and to propose a strategy for TACSO 2 actions. In this meeting, LAG members discussed the needs assessment findings and made analysis regarding actions/strategies to be implemented to overcome the challenges of civil society in Turkey. The following general problems were prioritized and relevant actions proposed:

1. Civil Engagement is low; and Participation levels within CSOs is low
- A set of principles could be proposed after reviewing other country examples and adapting them to Turkey
- Transparency and accountability among CSOs should be promoted
- Learning from others – the organizations who managed to set more egalitarian and non-hierarchical decision-making and participation mechanisms (e.g. some feminist and environment organizations) could pose as good examples

2. Participation in decision-making mechanisms is low
- Networks and platforms should be supported
- Information and knowledge should be generated and made accessible on ways, methods and process of decision-making in Turkey to be widely disseminated among CSOs
- CSOs capacity in advocacy should be increased
- Campaigns and advocacy initiatives should be further supported
- Policy-developing CSOs should be supported
- Good examples from Turkey and other EU countries should be introduced and promoted
- Thematic and cross-thematic working groups should be supported
- Especially the coming years, support should be provided for CSOs and initiatives working towards constitutional reform

- New and applicable mechanisms for possible public-civil society consultation should be proposed;
- Facilitation efforts should be provided for groups that are severely affected from political polarizations in searching for common ground
- Grants should be more accessible (language, format, etc)
- Implementation problems regarding legislation should be made clear and relevant reforms should be proposed

3. (Re-)defining civil society sector and its structures

- There is a growing need for dialogue among civil society – hence opportunities should be created for CSOs to discuss the definitions, reasons of existence, problems, methods
- Bringing CSOs from different sectors/thematic areas together
- Dialogue meetings/fairs bringing civil society together should be organized

The strengths and priorities of TACSO and other planned projects/activities of relevant stakeholders were also discussed in the same meeting. As a result of this analysis, LAG meeting participants proposed the following approaches and methods to be mainstreamed in all TACSO 2 actions:

- To support (on-demand) networks, partnerships and platforms Supporting dialogue between the CSOs in the Western Balkans (IPA countries), the EU and Turkey. This is in line with the research findings, which clearly indicates that the majority of CSOs in Turkey lack international level networking and collaboration skills and resources. The need for TACSO support in partner "match-making" was openly stated during both the focus group and individual meetings.
- Thematic good/best examples and lessons-learned sharing
- Establish a close cooperation with other stakeholders (e.g. the Consortium project; EU; public institutions) that will be working on similar interventions – for timely flow of information on actions and to contribute to a stronger synergy between all actions. TACSO has the capability to facilitate the information sharing and synergy creation between the EU funded projects and the public institutions concerned through Project's LAG (which includes public institutions, the EU Delegation, most members of the CSO Consortium Project).
- Refrain from short-time "class" type trainings and concentrate on a longer-term capacity building of organisations rather than individuals

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Summary of strategic issues of relevance to the project

The CSI 2010 study states and this Needs Assessment for TACSO Turkey findings confirm, that the *"civil society in Turkey continues to present more weaknesses than strengths".* The previous CSI study conducted in 2005, and was quoted at various parts of the 2009 Needs Assessment report of TACSO Turkey, suggested that *"there was an improving trend regarding many of the existing limitations and captured civil society undergoing transition and facing respective challenges in that process".* The 2010 CSI study confirms the conclusion that the civil society in Turkey is still in transition but this time, also suggests that *"civil society in Turkey faces a major turning point: it will either use its strengths to deepen its role as an indispensable actor in social and political life in Turkey; or it will enter a stagnation period".* Various civil society actors voiced similar statements during focus group meetings or individual interviews conducted within the context of this needs assessment study. Some comments were

very strong and defined the situation, which the civil society in Turkey is in "a crisis". The following points can be suggested when the findings of this need analysis are concerned:

- Civic engagement/public participation continues to be very low in Turkey and hence, the civil society to a large extent remains to be detached from a large portion of the public. Furthermore, their interaction and relation with their constituencies are also quite weak raising questions regarding their legitimacy
- Civil society in Turkey lacks important self-criticism forums or spaces in which discussion on important topics regarding civil society in general could be discussed strengthening dialogue
- Legal framework continues to be restrictive and bureaucratic and hence does not promote civil society participation
- Participation and/or consultation mechanisms for public-civil society relations are still very weak, obscure, or non-existent
- CSOs lack understanding and/or skills in influencing public policy and the majority of CSOs still fulfill services that normally fall under public/government responsibilities (such as education, health, poverty aid, social solidarity and social services, etc) and only a limited number of organisations work on rights and rights-based policies.
- Lack of participatory democratic structures, lack of innovative organisational forms, insufficient financial and human resources, lack of transparency and accountability and lack of collaboration/cooperation with other organisations are major problems regarding organisational weaknesses.
- Although there is a considerable improvement in establishing collaboration/cooperation networks among CSOs, these are still limited and mostly organized around a thematic. Hence, dialogue opportunities between civil society actors working on different areas/themes are very limited.
- Networking and partnership skills, especially on international level is still very weak, mostly due to language barriers but also due to lack of information regarding possible organisations in other countries.
- There have been drawbacks in government-civil society relations, largely due to the failure to implement legal reforms. (CSI 2010)
- Communication and coordination among actors from civil society, donors, and public is very weak. Hence, re-confirming the finding of the 2009 study, the project, is well placed to mediate between government, donors and civil society. TACSO 2 also has the perspective to closely collaborate with initiatives to support civil society provided through various actors/donors towards described challenges. One of the important means of TACSO is the LAG composed of participants with representative diversity from civil society and governmental institutions.

4.2 Needs assessment conclusions

The civil society environment

As in 2009, the **legal framework** is still restrictive, laws continue to be applied inconsistently and as also mentioned in the EC 2011 Progress Report, "*disproportionate controls and restrictive interpretation of legislation*" particularly towards CSOs working on advocacy and monitoring in the fields of human rights and democratic governance. The civil society actors accept the fact that there is an on-going effort for further reform as positive but they are cautiously waiting for the results.

The **financial and tax framework** for CSOs also continue to be unsatisfactory, *"owing to bureaucratic restrictions on fundraising activities, low levels of tax exemptions for CSOs, and an arbitrary and obscure process for gaining public benefit status necessary to potential donors to benefit from generous incentives for charitable giving"*, as mentioned in the 2009 needs assessment study.

The **funding** amounts and structures are not able to meet the divergent and emergent civil society in Turkey. When the financial and organisational resources of civil society in Turkey is taken into consideration, the grant amounts, are either too low or too thematically project-oriented, and hence are not adequate in meeting the organisational needs of the civil society. The government is still not a regular funder of civil society and its contribution to civil society is relatively insignificant, despite the new funding programme of the MoI.

Corporate funding continues to be insignificant and mostly provided for service-oriented activities. Furthermore, corporate funding has witnessed an important downsizing due to the economic crisis. However, corporate funding seems to be improving (CSI 2010 report) and has a potential for further growth.

As in 2009, and despite some minor improvements mentioned above under the relevant part of this report, there are no concrete and institutionalized government structures for regular participation/consultation with civil society.

Civic engagement and public perception towards civil society is improving but still at a very initial state and only a very small percentage of the population participate in civil society actions. However, CSI 2010 study states that although *"a very narrow and limited part of the population engages in civil society in Turkey, those that do so do it rather intensely and frequently. For instance, 30% of social volunteers and 21.6% of political volunteers and 11.5% of social members and 16.6% of political members are active in at least two CSOs". This finding is further supported by a recent study: Turkey Values Survey (2011) by Yılmaz Esmer, executed every year within the context of World Values Survey. The findings of the survey suggest that there is serious decline in the number of people who stated that "they will never sign a mass petition" has been constantly increasing during the last years. The following figure illustrates the answers given to the same question since 1990:*

1990	46%
1996	45%
2000	44%
2001	44%
2006	53%
2011	61%

CSO organisational capacities

Civil society organisations are active in all of Turkey's 81 provinces, but as in 2009, their distribution is still very uneven. There is a marked concentration of CSOs in urban areas, especially the three largest cities, Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

CSOs tend to be more active in social services and solidarity, making advocacy and policy oriented activities less common. About 65% of associations do not work on policy issues but rather on delivering social services and on solidarity (DoA, 2008). The

pattern is very similar in foundations.

More than half of the CSOs in Turkey do not have paid staff and the active volunteer numbers are usually under 10 people. According to CSI 2010 study, *"71% of CSOs that have volunteers and 85% of CSOs that have paid staff report having insufficient human resources to realize their goals".* Hence, this dimension was one of the weakest dimensions coming out of the study.

CSO capacities for carrying out advocacy and engaging in policy dialogue are extremely limited.

Most CSOs suffer from serious shortfalls in basic technical skills, such as organisational management, collaboration with volunteers, fundraising and financial management. Furthermore, as in 2009, strategic thinking capacities as well as analytical capacity are particularly weak in Turkish CSOs: programme planning is very rarely carried out. They tend to act towards available funding areas and requirements rather than seek funding for their programming. This in turn, negatively affects their relation with their constituencies.

CSI 2010 report also underlines the weakness of CSO's internal governance structures, reporting procedural elections, president-oriented and top down decision-making structures and conflicts of interest as symptoms of such organisational problems.

Although informal networking according to specific issues and selected projects is growing in popularity, cooperation and communication between CSOs is at a low level and organisations are generally poorly networked. CSI 2010 study states that *"CSOs working in similar fields and close geographical proximity enjoy higher levels of communication and cooperation do CSOs from different spheres and locations".*

International networking within the civil society is particularly weak. According to the CSI 2010 report, *"58% of CSO survey participants did not share any documents or information while 63% did not engage in any form of cooperation with an international counterpart. Similarly, only 28% of CSOs reported being a member of an international network or umbrella organisation".* The survey results conducted within this needs assessment study presented a similar picture; only 34% of respondents stated that they make partnerships (from time to time) with international CSOs.

Lack of financial resources, presenting a continuing trend, is still the most pressuring concern of the CSOs, and comes as the top of the problems list. As in 2009, this is due to *"poorly developed fundraising and programme development skills, but also to the absence of a suitable architecture of financial support for civil society activities".*

4.3 Recommendations for the regional and country specific work plan

LAG recommendations based on the findings of this Needs Analysis, regarding both the regional and country specific (merged) work plans were as follows presented under different headings:

1. CSO Governance – Collaboration - Communication
- Start and facilitate a discussion on codes of conduct (for a more democratic, egalitarian and participatory organisational governance) and support in dissemination
- bringing examples from other IPA countries (e.g SOKNO), other EU states and Turkey (including non-formal civil society groups to learn from them)

- allow for and facilitate a discussion of these examples and disseminate results
- Bring "quality framework" to attention of CSOs reference to transparency and accountability in relation to Code of Conduct concept for civil society.
- Create a training/supervision programme that will include the role of civil society, CSO governance principles, recruiting more volunteers/members; collaboration with volunteers, etc
- Conducting a ToT (supervisors) programme towards different CSO activists coming from different thematic areas to be able to create a pool of activists being able to act as supervisors/mentors/guides for CSOs within a longer organisational relation
- Disseminating the CSO Leadership Training (curriculum and methods) for possible utilization by other stakeholders, CSOs, etc
- Organize thematic partnership/collaboration meetings coinciding with grant calls to be made

2. Participation in Decision-making/Legislation:
- Gathering and sharing of good examples of advocacy/participation from western Balkans, EU countries and Turkey
- Create a training programme on advocacy, campaigning, which will include new, alternative and creative activism/action methods –
  - Bringing activists (such as Amnesty; HES opposition group; etc) from other countries and Turkey to learn from them
  - Explore methods and activism through new media and technology and include it in the ToT programme
  - Bring together a group of activists from different sectors of civil society who are dedicated to continue capacity building on the topic to learn from each other, discuss methods, make adaptations to Turkey conditions, etc and create a ToT programme (e.g Action Workshops)
  - Conducting a ToT (supervisors) programme towards different CSO activists coming from different thematic areas to be able to create a pool of activists being able to act as supervisors/mentors/guides for CSOs within a longer organisational relation
- Support for networks and platforms should continue (especially for the most disadvantaged) including non-formal groups
- Encourage donor organizations and private sector to initiate participatory processes for CSOs, enhance NGO participation to consultation processes of donors and private organizations, increase CSOs proactive approach for providing feedback to donors and private sector.

3. Civil Society Dialogue/Discussions:
- Organize civil society dialogue events – to discuss the role of civil society; reasons of being; methods and approaches; alternative models and methods; problems and solutions; create space for controversial debates such as projects vs. action/initiatives; grants vs. members; professionalism vs. activism, etc
- Support events to bring CSOs, donor organizations and private sector together such as CSO Days or CSR Fair to enhance dialogue and share standpoints and exchange information between different sectors.

4. Media-Civil Society Relations:
- Updating the guide and training workshop of Bianet on "how to be visible in the media"
- Organize several workshops towards CSOs
- Success stories of civil society achievements to be more visible in the media

5. Exit Strategy:
Participating LAG members underlined the fact that the strategic plan proposed (above) is in itself is an exit strategy since it includes a series of ToT programmes and the facilitation of a civil society dialogue that can and will continue after 2 years of TACSO II implementation with important aspects arising from it to be handled by other existing organisations.

One important roles of TACSO, which found to be relatively difficult to fulfill was:
- The role of bridging between other IPA countries to facilitate a learning-dialogue and partnership building

For this several actions were proposed:
- the possible transfer of the database to the MoEU
- to make a research/mapping of civil society partnerships/collaborations established with/without TACSO support and disseminating lessons learnt
- establishing sectoral/thematic long-term partnerships

One other issue raised during the LAG meeting was about the role of TACSO (between different stakeholders) and its continuation. The question raised was if there is a need for a more formal body of coordination or not. The participant members decided that if this is a need from the civil society, it might be discussed during the civil society dialogue meetings planned and once and if there is a need, relevant actions could be then proposed.

Annex I - Acronyms and abbreviations used in the text

CSCD   Civil Society Development Centre (*tur*. STGM)

CSI   Civil Society Index

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

DoA   Directorate of Associations

EC   European Commission

EIDHR   European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

EU   European Union

LGBT   Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-gender

IHOP   Human Rights Joint Platform

IPA   Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

LAG   Local Advisory Group

MoI   Ministry of Interior

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

SIDA   Swedish Agency for International Development

SIPU   Swedish Institute for Public Administration

SODES   Social Support Programme

TACSO   Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations

ToT   Training of Trainers

TUSEV Turkish Third Sector Foundation

UNDP   United Nations Development Programme

ANNEX II – Research Methodology

This needs analysis study was conducted over a period of one month during September and October 2011, by one senior expert, Selen Lermioğlu Yılmaz.

The first phase of the study included a comprehensive **desktop review** of all legal, financial regulations relevant to civil society in Turkey, various important documents available on civil society in Turkey, such as previous mappings, assessments, research and survey results, articles, reports and other contextual material.

The consultation phase of the study included a series of individual interviews, focus group meetings and a survey. Four **regional focus group meetings** were held in Istanbul, Ankara, Trabzon and İzmir. Care was taken when selecting CSOs to ensure the participation of a variety of CSO types of different sizes and stages of organisational development, as well as broad geographical representation. The following information was gathered from CSOs at each meeting: positive developments, or improvements in the environment that civil society operates within; problems of CSOs and last but not least action proposals for overcoming the problems and challenges. Meetings lasted for 2.5-3 hours.

A series of **interviews** were held with representatives of prominent CSOs, donors and international institutions, a university center, and also central and local government authorities. Meetings lasted between one and three hours.

Last but not least a short questionnaire was prepared and circulated to the database of TACSO Turkey with the aim to access other CSOs as well. Within a period of 15 days, a total of 102 responses were received and analyzed.

Analysis of data and writing of the report was conducted over a period of 15 days and a first draft was completed in mid-October 2011.

ANNEX III – List of CSOs participated in the focus groups

Ankara
AEGEE Ankara
Capital City Women's Platform
CSDC (STGM)
KA-DER (Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) Ankara
Kaos-GL
Roma Youth Association
WWF (World Wild Life Fund)

İstanbul
Anadolu Kültür
Association of Committees for Monitoring Parliamentarians and Elected Officials

(TUMIKOM)
Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
EDROM (Edirne Roma Association)
Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV)
Lambda
Lions Club
Support for Modern Life Association (ÇYDD)
The Turkish Foundation for Combatting Soil Erosion, for Reforestation, and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA)
Youth Re-autonomy Foundation of Turkey (TÇYÖV)

İzmir
Association of the Volunteers for the Children, Young People and Their Families Under Risk of Crime (ÇOVAK)
Association for Solidarity with Refugees (Mülteci-der)

Trabzon
Art of Photography Association
Association to Protect Natural and Historical Values
Blacksea Women's Association (KARKADER)
Chamber of Agricultural Engineers The Turkish Foundation for Combatting Soil Environmentalists of Blacksea
Erosion, for Reforestation, and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA) Trabzon branch
Femin-art
Human Rights Association Trabzon
Life Women Centre Association
Trabzon Women's Platform

Annex IV Outcome of the Strategic Planning Workshop with LAG Members

Following the needs assessment initial findings, TACSO Turkey team organized a LAG meeting to discuss the findings, the challenges and to propose a strategy for TACSO 2 actions.

In this meeting, that took place on 10-12th October 2011, an analysis of major trends affecting civil society in Turkey was discussed and priority areas were identified that are very much in line with the points covered above (3.1 and 3.2).   For this, mind-map method was used and the following trends were identified by the participating LAG members as major trends affecting civil society in Turkey: (in no specific order):

- Public expectation from CSOs is increasing
- Civil society visibility is increasing in the media
- Number of platforms is increasing
- Increase in getting organized
- Participation within organisations is becoming inadequate
- professionalism is increasing
- number of members in CSOs is decreasing
- Competition among CSOs is increasing
- Working areas of civil society is developing
- The relationship of CSOs with their constituencies is inadequate
- More international organisations are coming into Turkey
- The problem of transparency of organisations is continuing

- The need for more discussion on the accountability of CSOs is increasing (perception and knowledge gap is continuing)
- Public pressure regarding this issue is increasing
• The requirements and expectations of volunteers are increasing
- The culture of and awareness on volunteerism is developing
• Public institutions' view/perception of civil society is positively developing
• Civil society is increasingly questioning its reasons of existence
• EU funds are more consciously utilized
- public institutions are getting more EU funds so the competition is increasing between public institutions and CSOs
• Civil society is being more able to respond to the needs of society
• Awareness on the importance of monitoring the legislative process is increasing
• Political polarization within civil society is increasing
- polarization within the media is also increasing
• Civil society is increasingly discussing participation in decision-making
- the need and effort for knowing more about (decision-making) mechanisms is increasing
- Participation is increasing
- Risk is increasing
• The discussion on "being organized" is increasingly developing
• Methods and procedures of organisations is becoming more identical
• Communication of organisations' with their members and the participation of members in organisations are inadequate
• More focused sector/thematic work (expertise) is increasing
• Public awareness on their rights is increasing and becoming more visible
• Participation of young people who cannot get organized in politics is increasing through civil society
• Civil society is using networks more actively
• The reputation of international organisations are increasing rather than local organisations
• EU excitement within the civil society is decreasing
• Competition between civil society (over EU funds) is increasing
• The need for new resources is increasing
• Public funds for CSOs is increasing
- Questions and concerns regarding how they are distributed are also increasing
• Threat against rights-based organisations is increasing
• Public resources are increasing
- their impact on civil society is increasing
• Mobilization is increasing
• The usage and role of social media is increasing
- keyboard activism is increasing
• More discussions on sustainability are being held
• More CSOs working on international level
• The expectation is increasing from CSOs in Turkey to extend their activities/impact in other countries

The LAG meeting participants, in a following session, continued the analysis by prioritizing the above-mentioned trends and as a result the following priority areas were identified:

1. Participation to and within CSOs is inadequate/problematic

- Within organisations: problem with professionals vs. volunteers; participation of members/volunteers/professionals in decision-making
- Relations with their constituencies is inadequate
- Relations with public is inadequate – number of members are very low
- Expectations of volunteers have increased

What needs to be done? / What are the problems?
- Gender equality in decision-making is a major problem in CSOs
- The structures are generally anti-democratic
- Advocacy organisations usually lack a strong relation with their constituencies
- CSOs lack skills in collaboration with volunteers and management of organisations
- A set of principles could be proposed after reviewing other country examples and adapting them to Turkey
- There are some organisations (and/or initiatives) in Turkey (e.g. some feminist organisations/groups) who are capable of creating relatively egalitarian structures – good to learn from them

2. Participation in decision-making mechanisms
- Platforms and networks
- Monitoring and participation in mechanisms
- Political polarization
- Social media
- Public institutions-civil society relations

What needs to be done? / What are the problems?
- Support for networks/platforms
- More information should be gathered and disseminated regarding participation and mechanisms
- Capacity building on advocacy
- Support for campaign and advocacy initiatives
- Support for policy-developing CSOs
- Dissemination and promotion of good examples (from Turkey; IPA countries and EU)
- Thematic working groups to be supported
- There is a need for more focused expertise
- Skills building towards policy-making and advocacy implementation
- Support for civil society initiatives on the reform of constitution
- A need for joint/common/coordinated work
- Format of public-civil society consultation until now has not been successful – new methods and mechanisms should be proposed and implemented
- The political polarization is increasing and affecting civil society (polarization within women's, youth, environment, etc movements)
- Need for facilitation to identify common grounds and act towards them
- Participation in grant programme decisions should be developed
- Grants should be more accessible (language, format, etc)
- EU process should be carried to local level
- Implementation problems regarding legislation should be made clear and relevant reforms should be proposed

3. Transparency and accountability / Internal governance
- Public expectation
- Discussions on accountability

What needs to be done? / What are the problems?

- Monitoring skills and methods are inadequate
- The problems under this heading found to be very much linked with the first topic (participation to and within civil society) and hence the proposed actions was being made overall within the context of the first topic

4. (Re-)defining civil society sector and its structures

- Identical methods replicated
- Discussions on "getting organized"
- Sector is developing
- Thematic expertise (more concentrated/in-depth)
- Increase in getting organized

What needs to be done? / What are the problems?

- There is a growing need for dialogue among civil society – to discuss the definitions, reasons of existence, problems, methods
- Bringing CSOs from different sectors/thematic areas together
- Dialogue meetings/fairs bringing civil society together

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