



EU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

Strengthening of the CSO skills and EU programmes funding opportunities

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Introduction: skills and the non-profit sector

The non-profit sector is different from other sectors – so the skills needed to work in the sector are also different



Introduction: skills and the non-profit sector

In what way is the sector different?

- We don't make a profit – financial management is different
- Our money doesn't come from product sales or taxes – so fundraising is different
- The people who work in the sector are committed, values-driven people – so managing people and teams is different
- The environment we work in is exceptional and very specific – so strategic management is different
- We do a good job only if we change society – so performance measurement is different
- We are governed in a unique way – so working on governing bodies is different

Introduction: skills and the non-profit sector

What can we do?



- How do we learn all of this? How can we manage better in the non-profit sector?
- Regardless of the perceived threats to the sector now, the sector will grow and become a key element of our economies
- We have to invest in knowledge, research and transfers of knowledge between academia and practitioners, in our own learning
- The EU has provided us with the means to develop our own resources for building skills in the non-profit sector
- It is up to CSOs and universities to take advantage of these opportunities and to take the steps to invest in the skills development for the sector

Agenda

- **10:30 – 10:50** **Welcome, introduction, objectives of the event**
 - Ms. Andreja Tonč, EU TACSO 3 Key Expert for Capacity Building**What are the skills needed in the CSOs/non-profit sector, and how might EU programmes like Erasmus+ help?**
 - Mr. Richard Allen, EU TACSO 3 Team Leader
- **10:50 - 11:10** **Strengthening of the CSO skills and EU Programmes funding opportunities**
 - Ms. Marija Armenski, EU TACSO 3 Country Coordinator for North Macedonia
- **11:10 – 12: 10** **Experience sharing – stories from the WBT-related practice**
Overview of experience from WB using Erasmus +
 - Ms. Maria Fabregas I Gonzalez, DG EAC C3 International Cooperation Unit**Experience in the national agency role and supporting CSO skills-related projects**
 - Mr. Marko Gjorgievski, Director at National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, Republic of North Macedonia**Opportunities for Academic Institutions to Cooperate with CSOs**
 - Ms. Dženana Husremović, Vice-rector for Teaching and Student Affairs, University of Sarajevo**CSO experience in skills strengthening with the support of EU programmes**
 - Ms. Jelena Manić Radoičić, Belgrade Open School
 - Ms. Aida Daguda , Centre for Civil Society Promotion, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **12:10 – 12:30** **Final discussion and closure**

EU Programs for CSOs Skills Development

- Erasmus+ (Capacity Building in Youth and Civil Society)
- CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values)
- Horizon Europe (Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society)
- Digital Europe Programme
- Creative Europe

Erasmus +

Country	Status of the country	Agency Name	Website
Albania	Partner country	Erasmus Office	https://erasmusplus.al
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Partner country	Erasmus Office	https://www.erasmusbih.com/en/
Kosovo	Partner country	Erasmus Office	https://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org
Montenegro	Partner Country	Erasmus Office	https://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/?lang=en
North Macedonia	Programme Country	National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility	https://na.org.mk/
Serbia	Programme Country	Foundation Tempus	https://tempus.ac.rs/
Türkiye	Programme Country	Turkish National Agency	https://www.ua.gov.tr/

Programme Countries - broader access to Erasmus+ funding and can apply directly for all key actions.

Partner Countries - can participate in selected actions but must often collaborate with Programme Countries to access funding.

Erasmus + Program for Skills development

Erasmus+ Action	Best For
Capacity Building in the Field of Youth (Key Action 2)	Strengthening CSO capacity in leadership, advocacy, and youth work
Cooperation Partnerships (Key Action 2)	Enhancing CSO networks, knowledge-sharing, and organizational development
Mobility for Youth Workers (Key Action 1)	Improving CSO staff skills in leadership, advocacy, and project management
Jean Monnet Actions	Improving CSO understanding of EU policies, governance, and advocacy
Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges	Fostering online learning, communication skills, and international networking
Alliances for Innovation (Key Action 2)	Driving innovation through collaboration in education and social change
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees	Providing higher education for CSO staff to develop leadership and advocacy skills

Erasmus +

Useful links:

- [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) — Main platform for Erasmus+ calls
- [EACEA Website](#) — Comprehensive Resources for Partner Countries
- [SALTO Youth](#) — Training, resources, and networking for Erasmus+ applicants
- [Erasmus+ Application Guides](#) — Step-by-step guidance for each Erasmus+ action
- Calls are published usually twice a year

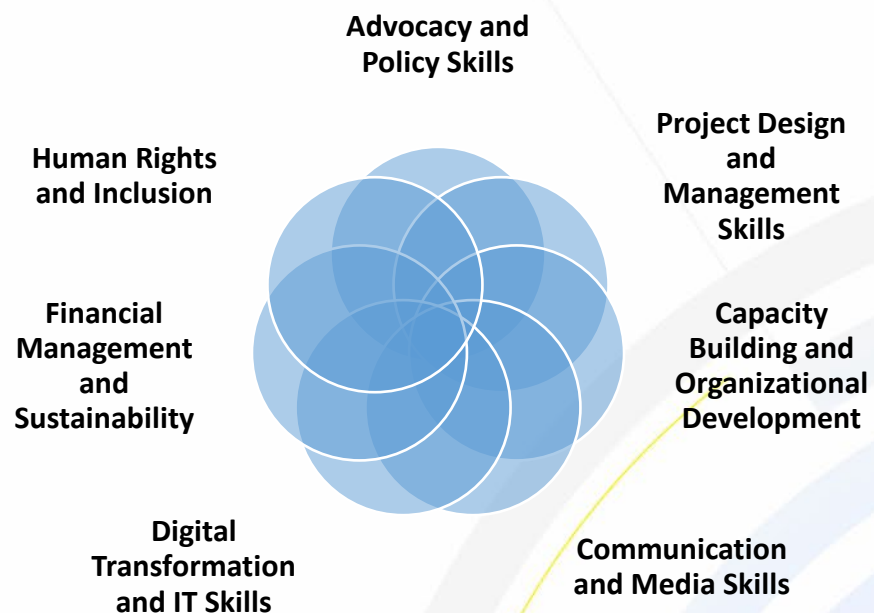
CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) Program

- The (CERV) Programme is the largest EU fund for promoting and protecting democratic values, fundamental rights, and the rule of law across the EU and neighbouring countries.
- Crucial for strengthening CSO capacity building, fostering active citizenship, and enhancing advocacy skills.
- Link to the Program: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>

CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) Program

CERV Action	Eligible for Western Balkans	Focus Area
Union Values	✗ Not Eligible	Focused on EU-specific values protection
Equality, Rights and Gender Equality	✓ Eligible	Projects combating discrimination, promoting inclusion, and gender equality
Citizens' Engagement and Participation	✓ Eligible	Projects promoting democratic engagement, policy dialogue, and civic participation
Daphne (Combating Violence)	✓ Eligible	Projects aimed at preventing and combating violence, especially gender-based violence

CERV Program for Skills development



CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) Program

 **February – March:** Main annual CERV calls for proposals are announced (majority of funding opportunities are published at this time).

 **April – June:** Additional thematic calls focusing on **anti-discrimination, gender equality, and victims' rights**.

 **September – October:** Calls related to **citizens' engagement, democratic participation, and rule of law**.

 **December:** Limited specialised calls, especially for **urgent priorities or targeted projects**.

Horizon

- Horizon Europe - key funding program for research and innovation (CSOs can participate in all six Clusters under Pillar II)
 - Cluster 2 explicitly focuses on Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society (Includes calls on civil society engagement, citizen science, participatory governance, disinformation, and social innovation)
- Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2025 is currently **under development**
- **Cross-cutting features:**
 - Multidisciplinary: combining social sciences, humanities, technology, and policy.
 - Cross-sectoral: involving researchers, civil society, cultural actors, public authorities, and private stakeholders.
 - Transnational: encouraging partnerships across EU Member States and associated countries.
 - Policy-relevant: designed to feed directly into EU and national policymaking.

Horizon (Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society)

- Key Dates for 2025 Calls:
 - Publication of Work Programme: April 2025
 - Info Day: May 15, 2025
 - Call Launch: June 2025 (exact date to be confirmed)
- Link to the Program: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-2-culture-creativity-and-inclusive-society_en
- Valuable information: https://horizoneuropencppportal.eu/cluster-2?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- NCP for the Program

Horizon Program (Cluster 2) for Skills Development

Activity: Social Innovation and Civic Engagement - **Skills developed:** Advocacy, policy dialogue, and community engagement

Activity: Capacity-Building for Democratic Participation – **Skills developed:** Governance, transparency, and civic activism

Activity: Digital and Media Literacy – **Skills developed:** Digital advocacy, online communication, and media skills
Promoting Inclusion and Diversity - Conflict resolution, dialogue building, and anti-discrimination strategies

Activity: Cultural Heritage and Creativity - **Skills developed:** Creative innovation, cultural preservation, and heritage protection

Digital Europe Program

- Digital Europe Program - funding to enhance digital skills, foster digital transformation, and support organisations in adopting digital technologies
- Countries that have **Association Agreements** with the EU are eligible to participate in the **Digital Europe Programme (all Western Balkan countries and Türkiye are associated countries)**
- NCP
- Program: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>
- Calls in April and June

Digital Europe Program for Skills development

Digital Skills for Citizens and CSO Staff

- **Advanced Digital Skills:** Training CSO staff in advanced IT tools, cybersecurity, data management, and AI technologies.
- **Basic Digital Skills for Inclusion:** Programs that enable CSOs to train marginalized groups, youth, and seniors in basic digital literacy.
- **Digital Skills for Social Impact:** Enhancing CSO capabilities in digital storytelling, online campaigning, and digital activism.

Capacity Building for Digital Transformation

- **Cybersecurity Readiness:** Helping CSOs adopt best practices for data protection and secure communication tools.
- **Digital Tools for Collaboration:** Supporting CSOs in implementing digital project management, CRM systems, and communication platforms.
- **AI and Data Skills:** Enabling CSOs to harness data-driven decision-making and improve advocacy strategies.

Digital Infrastructure and Innovation

- Funding for CSOs to improve their digital infrastructure to enhance remote working, hybrid events, and stakeholder engagement.
- Building capacities to implement **e-governance** and **open data** initiatives.

Creative Europe

Funding program designed to support the cultural, creative, and audiovisual sectors through fostering cultural diversity, strengthening the competitiveness of these sectors, and promoting cross-border cooperation.

- Western Balkan countries as **associated countries** are **fully eligible** for funding
- Türkiye* submitted interest to participate
- Program <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe>
- Program Guide 2021-2027 <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/funding/cultureu-funding-guide>
- Funding calls <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/funding/calls>

Creative Europe for Skills development

Cultural Management Skills: Training in project design, budgeting, and impact evaluation.

Digital Innovation Skills: Integrating digital tools into creative processes.

Audience Development Techniques: Expanding cultural engagement through digital media and creative marketing.

Media Literacy Training: Equipping CSOs to combat disinformation and enhance critical thinking.

Storytelling and Campaigning Skills: Improving CSOs' ability to deliver impactful narratives for social change.