



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



DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027

Introductory presentation

Prepared by EU TACSO 3 on behalf of
European Commission DG NEAR
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What is this presentation about?

- » This presentation gives a very brief overview of the DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027.
- » It explains why the Guidelines were developed, what they contain, and how they can be used.





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Why is civil society important?

- » An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democracy;
- » The values of the EU – the respect of human dignity, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including minority rights – require an active civil society to uphold these values.
- » CSOs can help address challenges facing the Western Balkans and Turkey region, including environmental protection, corruption, media freedom, judicial independence and social cohesion.
- » Civil society organisations contribute to democratic governance, creating a demand for transparency, accountability and effectiveness from public institutions.
- » Civil society can help citizens to understand need for reforms as part of the EU integration process.





② **The EU is committed to working with civil society...**

- » Structured participation of civil society organisations in policy and decision-making is a key priority for the EU.
- » EU policy documents for external relations and enlargement highlight the importance of this cooperation and of an enabling environment for civil society.
- » The accession process requires the engagement of civil society organisations in policy and negotiations.
- » The EU has programmed EUR 218 million for support to civil society 2021-2023 in the Western Balkans and Turkey through the Civil Society Facility.





3 **Civil society in the WBT region is facing pressures on a number of fronts...**

- » Civic space – freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are the ‘fundamental freedoms’ in some countries of the region, these are under threat.
- » Threats include an increasing use of ‘SLAPP’ lawsuits to intimidate and prevent free speech and whistleblowing, misuse of anti-terrorism legislation to unreasonably increase administrative burdens and use of local environmental laws to prevent assemblies;
- » Public funding for civil society is low, and sometimes non-transparent or not accountable.
- » CSOs are facing new challenges also faced by the wider economy – from economic pressures, Covid fallout, and the energy crisis.





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What is in the Guidelines?

The Guidelines consist of:

- » a set of standards for Authorities and civil society to meet;
 - » a set of indicators against which each IPA Beneficiary can be measured to assess its progress in meeting the standards.
- » The standards are based on regional and international legislation and norms that have already been accepted by all in the Western Balkans and Türkiye region. «





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What are the objectives?

 <p>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE</p>		
<p>A conducive environment for civil society to carry out its activities.</p> <p>10 objectives 26 indicators</p>	<p>Cooperation and partnership between CSOs and public institutions.</p> <p>3 objectives 10 indicators</p>	<p>CSO capacity and resilience to carry out their activities effectively are reinforced.</p> <p>8 objectives 23 indicators</p>





⑥ Assessment against the EU Guidelines

- ⚙️ There are 59 indicators defined in the guidelines, linked to sub-objectives.
- ⚙️ Research is conducted by an impartial team of experts.
- ⚙️ A report will be produced annually.
The baseline year is 2021.
- ⚙️ Data to assess performance in each of the IPA Beneficiaries will come from multiple sources, including:
 - a survey of CSOs;
 - a survey of Government representatives;
 - legal analysis,
 - review of existing research & secondary data;
 - verified through focus groups and consultation.





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What can the Guidelines be used for?

For public authorities:

- » A framework for Government strategies for cooperation with civil society;
- » Explains EU expectations for meeting standards regarding civil society in the EU approximation process;
- » Data for monitoring progress in meeting international standards and implementation of civil society cooperation strategies.

For civil society:

- » Creates a shared view on expected results of EU assistance for enabling environment, government – civil society cooperation and CSOs' performance and accountability standards;
- » Data, evidence and analysis for assessments of current state of civil society – informing priorities and underpinning funding applications;
- » CSOs' own development strategies and priorities in meeting international standards.

For EU:

- » Assist in designing and implementing EU support to civil society – priorities, challenges and what works;
- » Provides analysis of the state of civil society, informs progress assessments for annual EC reporting.





Next steps

- 1 Sept – Nov 2022: Launching and promoting guidelines
- 2 Aug – Dec 2022: Baseline analysis of the revised Guidelines (2021)
- 3 2023: Launching report and promoting findings
- 4 2023: First annual analysis against the Guidelines, providing first measure of progress





Questions

What questions do you have?





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Thank you!



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