

CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX

2008–2010

**CIVIL SOCIETY IN BULGARIA:
CITIZEN ACTIONS WITHOUT
ENGAGEMENT**

The CIVICUS CSI Analytical Country report for Bulgaria was developed by the team of the OSI Sofia European Policies and Civic Participation Programme in partnership with the CIVICUS research team

The views expressed in this report are those of the lead author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Open Society Institute – Sofia.

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FOREWORD

Open Society Institute – Sofia (OSI-Sofia) has broad experience in building civil society infrastructure and enhancing civic participation as a stronger voice in policy-making. The CSI project provides an excellent opportunity to streamline and deepen this expertise. This project has been implemented in close cooperation with UNDP Bulgaria, Balkan Assist Association and the project's Advisory Committee members, who provided invaluable guidance and support.

With the accession of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007, there have been noticeable changes in the sector, both in the contextual background and in the impact achieved by the so-called 'organised' and 'uninstitutionalised' parts of civil society. The CSI provides a starting point for identifying, measuring and explaining these changes.

CSI has proven challenging, but also a great opportunity to explore the state of civil society in Bulgaria in depth. It is an important step in identifying main strengths and weaknesses in the sector. The study outlines trends and challenges in the sector and provides recommendations for enhancing the role of civil society, with the potential to exert significant societal impact.

The CSI is a participatory needs assessment and action planning tool, which has the overall goal of creating a knowledge base for strengthening civil society in the world. The CSI report on Bulgaria: Citizen Actions without Engagement represents a good point for initiating a broad debate on the role of civil society in Bulgaria more than 20 years after the fall of communism and three years following accession to the EU. The new context brings new responsibilities for CSOs. The limited EU leverage on democratic consolidation and internal policy reforms in social policy, healthcare and education require a stronger voice of civil society in social responsiveness and in policy-making. This calls for an enhanced function of CSOs as a public monitor, service provider and mediator of citizens' needs.

This study is part of an international endeavour in more than 40 countries and has proven timely in addressing the major challenges in civil society development in Bulgaria. OSI-Sofia considers this undertaking instrumental in initiating a platform for action for CSOs in Bulgaria to consolidate their potential for a better social and policy impact.

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The team of the OSI-Sofia European Policies and Civic Participation Programme greatly appreciates the assistance of Balkan Assist Association, which provided invaluable insights and recommendations from the previous implementation phase of the project.

Special thanks go to UNDP Bulgaria, to Maria Zlatareva, and Maya Nyagolova for placing confidence in our team and for providing ongoing financial assistance and expert support.

This report would have not been possible without the contribution and expert advice given by the CSI Advisory Committee members (list in Appendix 2). They provided ongoing consultation and invaluable input from the beginning of this undertaking.

The CSI team would like to thank personally Krasimira Velichkova (Bulgarian Donors Forum), Luben Panov (BCNL), Assoc. Prof. Petya Kabakchieva (Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”) and Slaveya Hristova (Balkan Assist Association) for the data, practical experience and information shared throughout the study. In addition, we extend our appreciation to the EVS 2008 team who provided the primary data of their research for the goals of the CSI.

Furthermore we would like to thank the contributors to this report, all of the partner organisations and experts that took part in the regional discussions and public events, all who provided information for the case studies and showed interest in our work, and who share our goals for the positive development of civil society.

Last but not least, the team is grateful to all the respondents, organisations and external experts that took the time to answer the questions in the Population, Organisational and External Perception Surveys, and who shape the picture of civil society in Bulgaria.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Committee
BCI	Basic Capabilities Index
BCNL	Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-profit Law
BULSTAT	Bulgarian Statistical Registry
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CSD	Centre for the Study of Democracy
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil society organisation
EU	European Union
EVS	European Values Survey
FLGR	Foundation for Local Government Reform
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NATURA 2000	Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIT	National Index Team
NSI	National Statistical Institute
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity, one of the seven operational programmes in Bulgaria, designed to streamline and allocate EU structural funds in Bulgaria
OSI-Sofia	Open Society Institute Sofia
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy. This programme was designed by the EU in 1989 as a support instrument to Poland and Hungary. It covers the

10 new EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe. Later on, it became one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Union to assist the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations for joining the European Union.

SAPARD

Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development

TI

Transparency International

UN

United Nations Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Index (CSI) is an international action-research project assessing the main strengths and weaknesses of civil society development worldwide. The analytical approach and the universal methodology of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation contributes to the comparability of the state of civil society in countries where the project is implemented. The current (third) phase encompasses more than 40 countries and builds upon three quantitative surveys – the Population, Organisational and External Perception Surveys, alongside qualitative research, case studies and discussions. This is the second implementation for Bulgaria, the first being carried out by Balkan Assist Association, 2003-2005. This allows us to draw recommendations in comparative perspective, with the first study serving as a starting point in helping to capture trends and challenges in civil society development in Bulgaria.

The current study is the first following the accession of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007. The process of EU integration considerably changed the contextual environment, adding three new dimensions: a new level of decision-making; EU leverage over domestic reforms; and new partners in decision- and policy-making, in the shape of the EU institutions. This offers a new momentum for civil society organisations (CSOs), in shaping their agenda and role in society and policy-making. Furthermore, there is a significant shift in the allocation of public funds to CSOs following the accession. The traditional donors reduced their financial contribution to CSOs, which further emphasised the main chal-

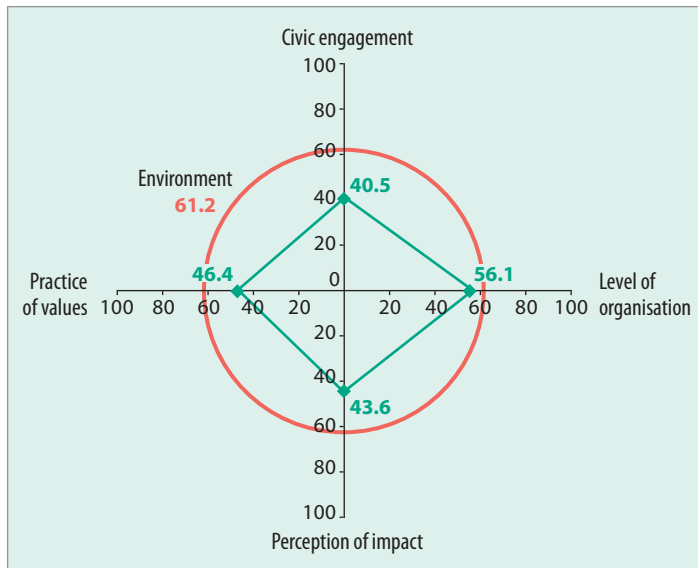


Figure 1.
CSI Diamond for Bulgaria

lenges in the sector. The CSI goes into detail of the state of civil society in the country, and produces the Civil Society Diamond.

The five dimensions covered by the CSI are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (Figure 1), based on quantitative indicators. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions, which assemble the five final dimensions along a 0-100 scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, level of organisation, perception of impact, as well as the relations between CSOs and citizens. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Diamond, identifying the main factors that represent a crucial element for its well-being. Extra quantitative variables in the questionnaires add further value to this study, and improve its overall diagnosis of the state of civil society in Bulgaria.

Civic Engagement scores lowest on the diamond with 40.5%. This proves a problematic trend for Bulgaria as it was one of the main findings of the previous phase, set out in the report *Civil Society without the Citizens* (Balkan Assist Association, 2005). Citizens' low level of participation in CSOs is reflected in this dimension. Lack of engagement, lack of willingness to get involved, a low level of trust and 'encapsulation' within family limits the potential for building community. The social links among citizens are weak and unsustainable; trust in public institutions and in CSOs is low. These trends result in apathy among citizens concerning CSO activities. However, an important finding of this study is the potential of informal civic groups to mobilise civic energy for upholding citizen interests.

The Level of Organisation dimension has a comparatively high score of 56.1%. This indicates a well-defined profile of CSOs in Bulgaria, a by-product of the financial, institutional and administrative assistance of foreign donors and international organisations since the beginning of the 1990s. CSOs are well equipped technically, but still experience financial problems. Financial unsustainability leads to employment instability, where most of the employed in the sector are on temporary or part-time contracts. The identified positive development of building civil society infrastructure of coalitions, networks, forums and platforms on the national level is still unsustainable, which prevents consolidation of CSOs to successfully exert impact on national level. CSOs also have limited representation on the EU level, which hinders their potential to actively participate in decision-making at this level.

These challenges influence the Perception of Impact dimension, which scores 43.6% on the diamond. This shows limited CSO impact in Bulgaria. CSOs are not fully able to respond to societal concerns and to advocate successfully to resolve social issues. This also limits their ability to exert advocacy on decision- and policy-making. However, in individual sectors, such as education, environment and support to vulnerable groups, CSO activities are perceived as more effective.

The Practice of Values dimension scored 46.4%, which shows high internal perception of democratic governance in CSOs. However, there are gaps in the application of labour regulations and environmental standards, as well as in the adoption of

a code of conduct. Corruption is seen as a serious challenge in civil society development in Bulgaria.

Corruption also remains a major issue in the External Environment, raising questions about the legitimacy of CSOs and their working practices. The context assessment is based largely on the scores of main international indexes, scoring highest in the diamond of 61.2%. The socioeconomic and political conditions seem favourable to civil society; however, some problematic sectors influence the development of civil society in Bulgaria more considerably. These include unfinished reforms in public administration, healthcare, social policy and education, the lack of capacity for public policy-making, a high level of perceived corruption, and economic challenges. There also remain unaddressed needs to ensure the functioning of the judiciary and to foster reform to secure impartiality, efficiency and respect of the rule of law; these too presently limit civil society's potential.

The CSI Bulgaria team has drafted specific recommendations to address these challenges. To improve civic engagement, further actions are necessary to facilitate communication between CSOs and citizens. In order to strengthen the level of organisation and impact, recommendations are put forward to foster internal consolidation of CSOs and better regulation of the possibilities for civic participation in decision- and policy-making. To achieve this goal, additional efforts are needed to put on the societal agenda the issue of public funding of CSOs and facilitation of better relations between CSOs and public institutions. Such actions will improve the contextual background and the working practices of CSOs, and create preconditions for better transparency and accountability of civil society.

I. THE CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in governance and development around the world. In most countries, however, knowledge about the state and shape of civil society is limited. Moreover, opportunities for civil society stakeholders to come together to collectively discuss, reflect and act on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities also remain limited.

The Civil Society Index (CSI), a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world, contributes to redressing these limitations. It aims at creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening. The CSI is initiated and implemented by, and for, civil society organisations at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS). The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, government, the media, donors, academics, and the public at large.

The following key steps in CSI implementation take place at the country level:

1. Assessment: CSI uses an innovative mix of participatory research methods, data sources, and case studies to comprehensively assess the state of civil society using five dimensions: Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and the External Environment.

2. Collective Reflection: implementation involves structured dialogue among diverse civil society stakeholders that enables the identification of civil society's specific strengths and weaknesses.

3. Joint Action: the actors involved use a participatory and consultative process to develop and implement a concrete action agenda to strengthen civil society in a country.

The following four sections provide a background of the CSI, its key principles and approaches, as well as a snapshot of the methodology used in the generation of this report in Bulgaria and the methodology's limitations.

1. Project Background

The CSI first emerged as a concept over a decade ago as a follow-up to the 1997 New Civic Atlas publication by CIVICUS, which contained profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (Heinrich and Naidoo, 2001). The first version of the CSI

methodology, developed by CIVICUS with the help of Helmut Anheier, was unveiled in 1999. An initial pilot of the tool was carried out in 2000 in 13 countries.¹ The pilot implementation process and results were evaluated. This evaluation informed a revision of the methodology. Subsequently, CIVICUS successfully implemented the first complete phase of the CSI between 2003 and 2006 in 53 countries worldwide. This implementation directly involved more than 7,000 civil society stakeholders (Heinrich, 2008).

Intent on continuing to improve the research-action orientation of the tool, CIVICUS worked with the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg, as well as with partners and other stakeholders, to rigorously evaluate and revise the CSI methodology for a second time before the start of this current phase of CSI. With this new and streamlined methodology in place, CIVICUS launched the new phase of the CSI in 2008 and selected its country partners, including both previous and new implementers, from all over the globe to participate in the project. Table 1 below includes a list of implementing countries in the current phase of the CSI.

Table 1.1.1: List of CSI implementing countries 2008-2010²

Albania	Italy	Philippines
Argentina	Japan	Russia
Armenia	Jordan	Serbia
Bahrain	Kazakhstan	Slovenia
Belarus	Kosovo	South Korea
Bulgaria	Lebanon	Sudan
Burkina Faso	Liberia	Togo
Chile	Macedonia	Turkey
Croatia	Madagascar	Uganda
Cyprus	Mali	Ukraine
Djibouti	Malta	Uruguay
Democratic Republic of Congo	Mexico	Venezuela
Georgia	Nicaragua	Zambia
Ghana	Niger	

¹ The pilot countries were Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Wales.

² Note that this list was accurate as of the publication of this Analytical Country Report, but may have changed slightly since the publication, due to countries being added or dropped during the implementation cycle.

2. Project Approach

The current CSI project approach continues to marry assessment and evidence with reflections and action. This approach provides an important reference point for all work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks which have greatly influenced the implementation that this report is based upon include the following:³

Inclusiveness: The CSI framework strives to incorporate a variety of theoretical viewpoints, as well as being inclusive in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes included in the project.

Universality: Since the CSI is a global project, its methodology seeks to accommodate national variations in context and concepts within its framework.

Comparability: The CSI aims not to rank, but instead to comparatively measure different aspects of civil society worldwide. The possibility for comparisons exists both between different countries or regions within one phase of CSI implementation and between phases.

Versatility: The CSI is specifically designed to achieve an appropriate balance between international comparability and national flexibility in the implementation of the project.

Dialogue: One of the key elements of the CSI is its participatory approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders who collectively own and run the project in their respective countries.

Capacity Development: Country partners are first trained on the CSI methodology during a three-day regional workshop. After the training, partners are supported through the implementation cycle by the CSI team at CIVICUS. Partners participating in the project also gain substantial skills in research, training and facilitation in implementing the CSI in-country.

Networking: The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools (e.g. focus groups, the Advisory Committee, the National Workshops) should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including at a cross-sectoral level. Some countries in the last phase have also participated in regional conferences to discuss the CSI findings as well as cross-national civil society issues.

³ For in-depth explanations of these principles, please see Mati, Silva and Anderson (2010), *Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: An updated programme description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Phase 2008-2010*. CIVICUS, Johannesburg.

Change: The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to action-oriented goals.

With the above mentioned foundations, the CSI methodology uses a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society at the national level. The CSI measures the following core dimensions:

- (1) Civic Engagement
- (2) Level of Organisation
- (3) Practice of Values
- (4) Perceived Impact
- (5) External Environment

These dimensions are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (see Figure I.2.1 below), which is one of the most essential and well-known components of the CSI project. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 quantitative indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions, which are then assembled into the five final dimensions along a 0-100 scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, and the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Civil Society Diamond, and is not regarded as part of the state of civil society but rather as something external that still remains a crucial element for its wellbeing.

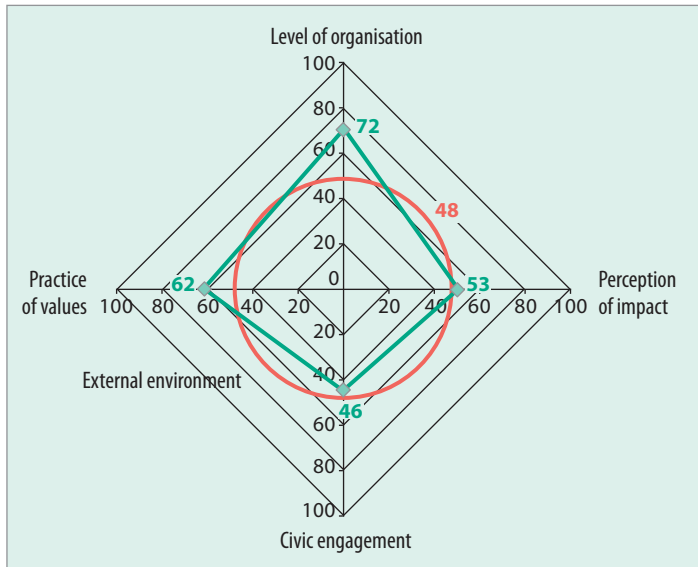


Figure I.2.1.
The Civil Society
Index Diamond

3. CSI Implementation

There are several key CSI programme implementation activities as well as several structures involved, as summarised by the figure below:⁴

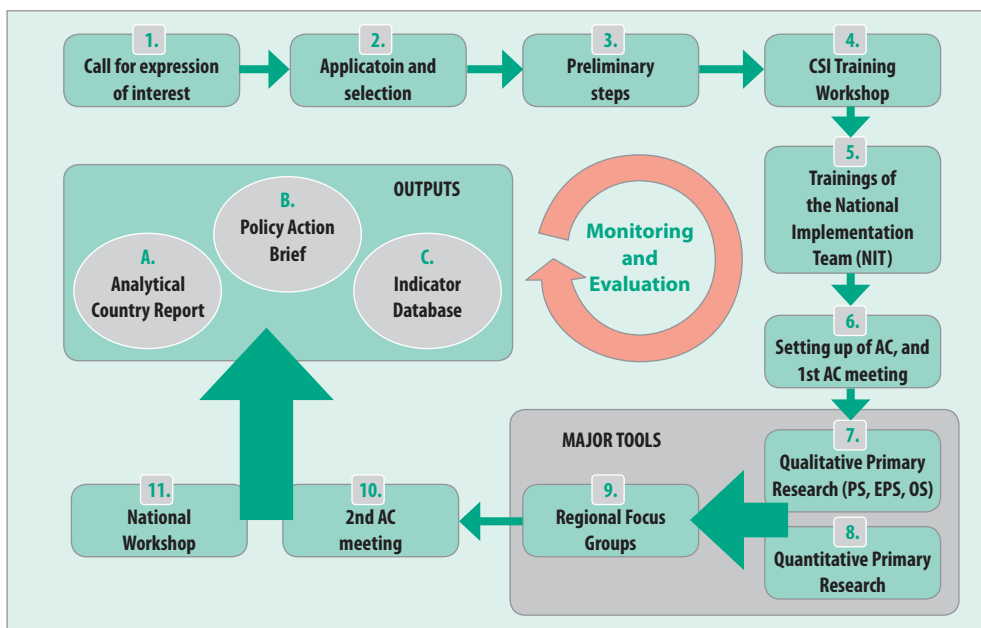


Figure I.3.1. CSI Implementation

The major tools and elements of the CSI implementation at the national level include:

- Multiple surveys, including: (i) a **Population Survey**, gathering the views of citizens on civil society and gauging their involvement in groups and associations; (ii) an **Organisational Survey** measuring the meso-level of civil society and defining characteristics of CSOs; and (iii) an **External Perceptions Survey** aimed at measuring the perception that stakeholders, experts and policy makers in key sectors have of civil society's impact.

- Tailored **case studies** which focus on issues of importance to the specific civil society country context in the five dimensions of the CSI. In the case of Bulgaria, these assessed: trends in civic engagement; fundraising through text campaigning; analysing legitimacy of civil society in Bulgaria through focusing on its main functions: expertise versus representation; examining the application of the principle of partnership in programming the EU funds in Bulgaria as a test for the abilities of the CSOs to impact on policy; and exploring the contextual background drawbacks of corruption and how it affects civil society development.

⁴ For a detailed discussion on each of these steps in the process, please see Mati et al (cited in footnote 3).

- **Advisory Committee (AC)** meetings made up of civil society and external experts to advise on the project and its implementation at the country level.
- Regional and thematic **focus group** discussions where civil society stakeholders reflect and share views on civil society's role in society by analysing the primary data of the research and giving feedback on the main findings.

The NIT team in Bulgaria followed the general guidelines provided by CIVICUS. However, as CSI is considered an important action-oriented research project, serving both the goals of comparability of the data and capturing the national specifics, the OSI-Sofia team, with the expert advice of the AC, developed additional questionnaires to supplement the quantitative surveys. This extra quantitative data adds value to this study, and improves its overall diagnosis of the state of civil society in Bulgaria, focusing on the following areas: civic engagement and alternative forms of action; legitimacy of CSOs and of the sector; impact of civil society on decision- and policy-making at the national and European Union (EU) levels; and civil society development following entrance by Bulgaria into the EU. With some data limitations, the study assesses five interwoven dimensions and provides a cross-cutting analysis of the main challenges, achievements and deficits of civil society, in addition to areas of concern, positive trends, civic potential and future opportunities.

The CSI 2008-2010 draws on the findings of the first phase for Bulgaria 2003-2005, implemented by Balkan Assist Association, Civil Society without the Citizens. This allows us to register major trends and specifics in the development of civil society in Bulgaria and to provide better evidence-based recommendations.

The CSI in Bulgaria also builds on the primary data of the EVS and follows trends and public opinions through the regular omnibus survey of the OSI-Sofia.

Following this in-depth research and the extensive collection of information, the findings are presented and debated at a National Workshop, which allows various stakeholders to discuss and develop strategies for addressing identified priority issues.

This Analytical Country Report is one of the major outputs of the CSI implementation process in Bulgaria and presents highlights from the research conducted, including summaries of civil society's strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for strengthening civil society in Bulgaria. The report is available online at: <http://osi.bg>.

4. Limitations of the Study

A specific limitation of the CSI is the desire to apply universal methodology to compare the state of civil society worldwide. By doing so, to some extent the project can limit the potential to focus on the nationally specific features of civil society. To overcome this limitation, the OSI-Sofia team added several variables to its questionnaires. This enables comparability with other countries covered by the CSI, while identifying and analysing trends and characteristics unique to Bulgaria.

The CSI is a turning point in the attempt to analyse and examine this new contextual background and to provide analysis of trends in civil society's development. In order to achieve these goals, the OSI-Sofia team, supported by an expert Advisory Committee (AC) (see Appendix 2 for a list of AC members), discussed the proposed methodology and invited further opinions on the development of questionnaires, a statement on civil society background, the mapping of civil society, the research plan and extra questions to be added to the surveys to add a national dimension to the CSI. After carefully discussing the suggested methodology and definition of civil society, AC members arrived at the following suggestions and recommendations for specific areas of interest to the CSI in Bulgaria:

- How the EU integration process influences civil society development in Bulgaria;
- What factors motivate civic participation;
- Links between the 'organised' part of civil society and the 'uninstitutionalised' part of civil society;
- Sources of legitimacy for CSOs in Bulgaria;
- Generation of trust in CSOs as the 'organised' part of civil society;
- The role of CSOs in empowering citizens and influencing public policies;
- Transparency and good government: how to ensure against conflicts of interest and mismanagement of CSOs.

II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN BULGARIA

1. Concept of Civil Society in Bulgaria

The concept of civil society in Bulgaria has various implications and meanings. There is no universally-accepted definition and there is no uniform classification of CSOs in Bulgaria. Civil society is considered to comprise primarily the various structures and organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act. In recent years, the concept has applied to civic activist groups and online action platforms. There are a number of names utilised: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations, third sector, civic sector, civic organisations, but the sector still lacks a clear-cut definition.

For the purposes of the CSI the NIT and AC agreed on the following definition of civil society: “Civil society is the dynamic arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance publicly shared interests.”

The idea of this definition is to capture the whole spectrum of civil society in Bulgaria with all its actors, activities and potential. It also includes citizen protests, internet forums, and blogs. The focus is more on civil society functions rather than on organisations. The AC members suggested the insertion of the following ideas into the original CSI definition: the word ‘dynamic’ is attached to ‘arena’ in order to illustrate the processes that are taking place within civil society, and the word ‘publicly’ is added to shared interests to stress the public character of civil society actions and activities.

2. History of Civil Society in Bulgaria

The origins of civil society and civic activism in Bulgaria can be traced back to civic activity in 19th Century. The first Bulgarian civic formations emerged in what today is Romania, prior to the National Revival Period, and the purpose was primarily cultural and educational. One such organisation was the Bulgarian Book Publishing Society, which was established in 1824–25 in Bucharest. The most common types of civic organisations during the National Revival Period were community centres, “chitalishta” (Gavrilova and Elenkov, 1992). The first three chitalishta arose in 1856 in Shoumen, Lom and Svishtov, and the number grew to 131 in only 14 years (Balkan Assist 2005, Gorchilova 2010). After Bulgaria’s Liberation in 1878, the development

of civil society continued. Civil society also had its place in the inter-war period, with the regulation of foundation activities recorded in 1933. Statistical yearbooks for the Kingdom of Bulgaria each had a chapter on social organisations and support for civic associations. The 1942 Yearbook lists 147 civic associations, including: 47 trade unions; 43 cultural and educational societies; 17 societies and unions for physical recreation; 15 charitable societies and unions; 12 scientific societies and unions; and 18 other formations. The comparatively large number of trade and professional unions indicates certain level of awareness and of mobilisation of group and professional interests. Cultural and educational societies, in their turn, promoted the right to education.

After World War II the communist period, from 1944 to 1989, was characterised by total monopolisation of the state over society and obligatory citizen participation in pseudo-civic structures. The first organisations to critique the communist regime appeared in the late 1980s. However, 1989 marked the turning point in civil society development, with the fall of communism and opening up of the state in political, economic and social terms.

The last twenty years of Bulgaria's development have been marked by a dynamic resurgence of civil society. Ninety-six percent of all CSOs were founded after 1989. In 2009, more than 30,000 organisations were registered, including those registered for public and private benefit, trade unions, religious associations and community centres.⁵

Recent historical background of civil society in Bulgaria:⁶

- Rebirth of Bulgarian civil society as a concept: 1988 – 1989: appearance of the first civil organisations for human rights.
- The 'gentle' anti-communist revolution: late 1989 – 1990: period of the 'square democracy'⁷ and outbursts of civic protests against the communist government.
- The institutionalisation of the NGO sector: 1992 – 1996: institutionalisation of various CSOs began; the NGO sector became visible through media and sociological surveys.
- The civic revolution – the overthrow of the third communist government: January – February 1997: civic protests following serious economic and political turmoil lead to the resignation of the communist government.
- The 'normalisation' period: 1998 – 2006: this period was characterised by political and economic 'normalisation'. Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004 and achieved sig-

⁵ Bulgarian National Statistical Institute: Financial statistics for Non-Profit Institutions: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=52>.

⁶ This classification of the stages is prepared by Assoc. Prof. Petya Kabakchieva for the CEE Trust Project Has our dream come true? Comparative research of Central and Eastern European Civil Societies.

⁷ In this case 'square democracy' is utilised to define the continuous citizens' protests against the government policies and direct civic pressure for reforms.

nificant progress in the integration with the EU. The internal and external setting was favourable for institutionalisation of various NGOs, both in terms of areas of activity and level of organisation.

- EU Membership: 2007 – ongoing: this period is characterised by diversified activities in the arena of civil society. Foreign donors accepted a phasing-out strategy by reducing the funds available for the CSOs in Bulgaria and another level of decision-making was added. This period saw re-organisation and diversification of the civil sector, the appearance of various informal civic movements, and the rise of social networking, blogging and online mobilisation as an efficient tool for opinion-making and citizen activity. The trends and activities of this period are the subject of study and analysis of this CSI.

3. Mapping Civil Society

The data show a significant growth in civil society, especially after the adoption of the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act in 2001. Non-profit legal entities can be registered under two organisational forms, associations and foundations, and can determine their objectives and means of action with almost no limitations.⁸ The legal act introduced the distinction of registration in public and in private benefit. This distinction means that organisations for the public benefit face stricter transparency and accountability supervision from the state. They are to implement activities fitting into specific areas stipulated in the law. According to the legislation, they also enjoy some preferences and are subject to a stricter audit and public control through the Ministry of Justice registry. However, this registry is subject to serious critique about its functionality and efficiency (BCNL 2010).

In March 2009, organisations working for the public benefit equalled 6,800. Associations, numbering 24,465, represent the largest segment of CSOs, while foundations represent around 17% of the total at 5,177. Of the remaining, 3,779 are community centres, and the rest, according to the official statistics of the BULSTAT Registry, are religious organisations and trade unions. Of all CSOs, however, only about 6,000 are considered active.⁹

CSOs are seen to enjoy a better position in society and are expanding their functions to provision of services and advocacy (Gorchilova 2010). However, the development of civil society in Bulgaria is largely the result of foreign intervention and donor assistance aimed at civil society capacity building. As a result the civil society sector

⁸ i.e. the specific activities through which they achieve their goals, excluding the limitations stipulated in the Constitution concerning the country's sovereignty and national integrity, the unity of the nation, incitement of racial, national, ethnic, or religious enmity, or an encroachment on the rights and freedoms of citizens. For further reference: <http://www.ngobg.info/bg/static/legislation.html>.

⁹ Evaluation on NGOs on the NGO portal at <http://www.ngobg.info/bg/messages/1011-30-000-нпота-в-българия-само-6000-от-тях-работят.html> and NGO Sustainability Index 2008: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2008/bulgaria.pdf

in Bulgaria is a by-product of a top-down exercise, formed primarily as a response to donor demand. Civil society works for the citizens rather than with the citizens, without a clear mandate from the citizens themselves. This emphasises critical questions about CSO representativeness: who is the legitimate voice of civil society, and what sources of legitimacy do the organisations have? The shifting political environment since joining the EU makes these questions, pertinent in the context of state-civil society relations, even more important.

The following data will suggest that civil society in Bulgaria today is characterised by low levels of engagement, a problematic public image, limited internal consolidation, and a lack of sustainable influence on policy-making. Despite these deficiencies in the state of civil society, in this phase of the CSI a new phenomenon is observed, namely, the generation of social energy under informal civic initiatives, through which civil society manages to influence public debate and societal changes. Further, many CSOs managed to develop stronger organisational cultures due to participation in various international and EU projects and programmes. Though still underdeveloped, CSOs realise the need to cooperate in order for their advocacy activities to significantly impact on decision- and policy-making.

Within the methodological framework and in order to identify and capture the main actors in society, the National Index Team (NIT) and the members of the Advisory Committee (AC) undertook a social forces analysis. The goal of this exercise was to visually map influential actors in Bulgaria to a) identify and discuss the relationships between civil society actors and other influential actors within society, and b) identify and discuss relationships among influential civil society groups within civil society. The main actors, relationships and the strength of civil society influence were identified through:

- brainstorming activities
- group discussion
- comparing influence, power and positioning of various actors and groups based on the expert evaluation of the AC.

The Social Forces Analysis identified the following conditions and factors, which shaped the environment at the beginning of 2009 when the project implementation began:

- The most influential forces appeared to be the interactions between organised crime, the oligarchs and the grey economy; the energy sector and business monopolies; and strong governmental leadership, combined with a weak parliament.
- The very limited role of the Orthodox Church and other religious institutions make them marginal to societal development.
- Identified civil society actors have relatively limited social influence.
- Civil society is not only defined by NGOs. Various civic initiatives and social networking appear to be new actors in this realm.
- Corruption strongly influences all development in Bulgaria.

III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN BULGARIA

This section reports in detail on the five dimensions of the CSI on the state of civil society in Bulgaria. It covers the individual indicators and sub-indicators that structure the CSI dimensions. The data is derived from the CSI quantitative research tools (population, organisational and the external perception surveys), the qualitative data from the case studies and the regional discussion groups, and is supported with relevant secondary data. Data from the EVS, additional variables in the quantitative surveys and the OSI-Sofia regular representative Omnibus survey¹⁰ were also utilised to explain the dynamics of civil society development in Bulgaria. The analysis follows the main CSI dimensions: Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and External Environment. Each dimension is structured on a scale from 0 to 100 and further analysed to explain national specifics, trends and challenges.

1. Civic Engagement

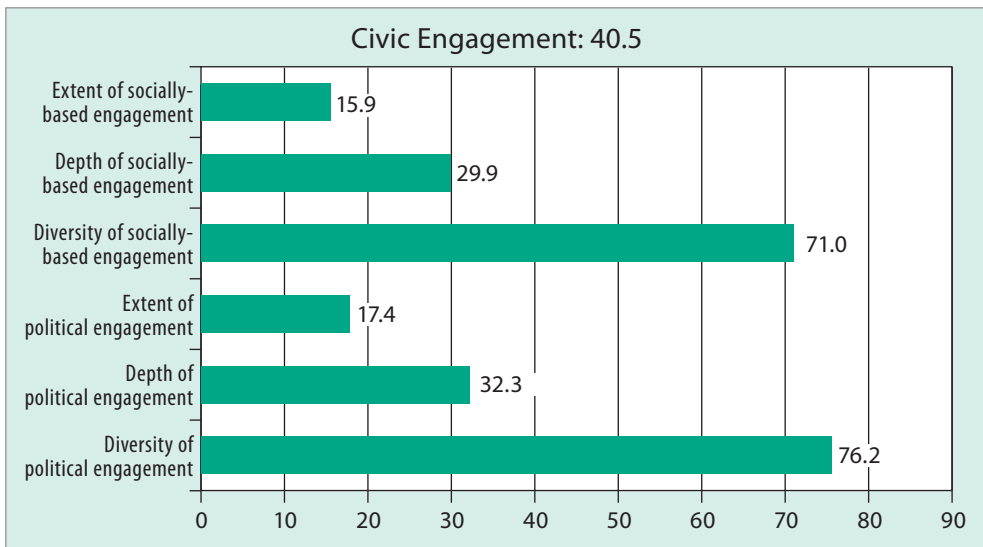


Figure III.1.1. Civic Engagement sub-dimension scores

¹⁰ An omnibus survey is a quantitative research method where data on a wide variety of subjects is collected during the same face-to-face interview. This method is applied by OSI-Sofia to regularly measure public opinion and attitudes on social, economical and political topics.

Civic engagement in Bulgaria is illustrated through the above indicators of social and political participation and volunteering. These data identify the challenges facing civic engagement and its potential, and the opportunities for building social capital. Data from the EVS have also been used to form this dimension.¹¹ On the basis of the pre-specified indicators, data from this dimension show:

- A low level of civic engagement in various organisations and voluntary activities;
- Citizens' lack of willingness to get involved in addressing social issues;
- Problematic CSO-citizen relationships displayed by the inability of CSOs to empower constituencies and the issues of legitimacy analysed in the case studies on civic engagement and practice of values (OSI-Sofia 2005);
- Problematic community-building due to a lack of sustainable social linkages between individuals, displayed through low trust of each other and low civic involvement;
- The limitation of citizens' social contacts primarily to family members, as shown by the CSI population survey;
- Strains in the social fabric that impede building of social capital, which inhibits civil society development in Bulgaria (EVS 2008-2009);
- Energy for potential mobilisation around certain causes supported by informal movements;
- The diversity of citizens that engage, which is an interesting finding against the background of low engagement and socio-political activity. Those engaged vary by gender, ethnic background, age and geographical locations.

The data from the CSI largely overlap with the findings of the EVS. Citizens tend to get 'encapsulated' within their family circle and their closest family members, which serve as a sort of safety net, but limit any social contact outside that circle. This is coupled with low trust in representative institutions and fellow citizens. Low levels of engagement and trust in social processes indicate a sustained trend, as confirmed by the three editions of the "State of Society" report.¹² Data from the last edition of the EVS show that 81.5% of citizens do not partake in the activities of any organisation.

However, a new trend in civic engagement deserves attention. Some types of informal activism seem to enjoy larger public support than the traditional CSOs. The new faces of civil society (activist groups, such as students and environmentalists) and the faces of the transition (such as pensioners) represent a significant percentage of the whole.

¹¹ EVS 2008-2009 Bulgaria: <http://info1.gesis.org/DBKSearch/SDESC2.asp?no=4774&DB=E> performed by a team of Prof. Georgi Fotev, Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, Prof. Pepka Boyadzhieva, Assoc. Prof. Petya Kabakchieva, Mario Marinov, Vladimir Vladov, Diana Nenkova.

¹² State of Society, 2008, OSI – Sofia presents expert analysis of three representative public opinion surveys conducted in 2002, 2006 and 2007 exploring major social and political trends in Bulgarian society <http://www.osf.bg/downloads/File/State%20of%20Society%202008.pdf>.

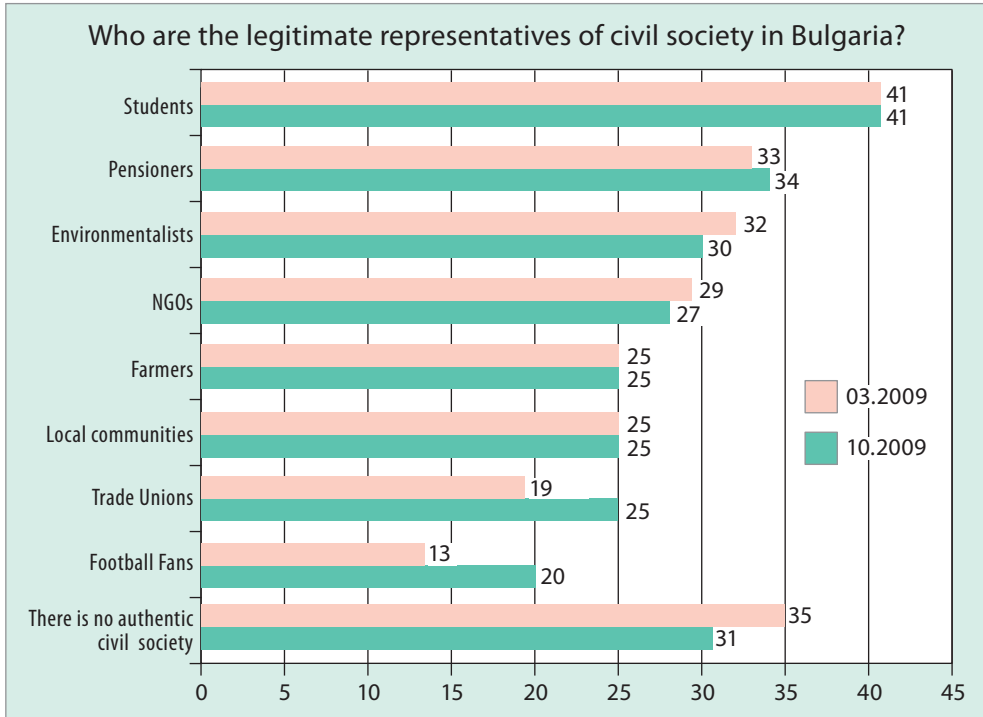


Figure III.1.2. Legitimate voice of civil society

Figure III.1.2 above summarises the responses to the additional questions in the population survey asking who people saw as the authentic representatives of Bulgarian civil society. The data show that civil society is mainly associated with the activities of different communities, informal groups of interest, or age groups. The October 2009 OSI-Sofia Omnibus survey has confirmed the identified trend. A majority of respondents does not recognise authentic representatives of civil society (31.3%), while the communities of students, pensioners, and environmentalists are seen as the main bearers of the concept, followed by the NGOs and the local communities (see also the CSI case study on civic engagement, summarised in Annex 3). The data is based on 2,272 responses from 1,217 respondents, February-March 2009 CSI population survey sample; and 1,846 responses from 1,210 respondents in October 2009, Omnibus regular representative survey of OSI – Sofia sample.

It turned out that the CSOs did not enjoy sufficient public awareness and attention; rather, single informal groups were being recognised as the legitimate representatives of civil society.¹³ The traditional image of the non-governmental organisation as representative of civil society was supplanted by a common perception that groups become visible primarily through causes, protests and initiatives, such as students, environmentalists and pensioners. Citizens refer to environmentalists,

¹³ Common opinion expressed during the regional discussions.

pensioners and students as the authentic representatives of civil society, and very often they conclude that there is no civil society in Bulgaria. It turns out that for citizens the centre of legitimacy lies not within certain organisations, but within various activist groups of citizens. The case study on Practice of Values (see Annex 3) shows that a deficit of government resources and lack of an operational and problem-oriented NGO serve as catalyst for uninstitutionalised civic activist groups to mobilise citizen potential in addressing social concerns.

It can be surmised that environmentalists managed to identify the appropriate tools to attract attention and invoke civic engagement. Their initiatives are specific and are well-targeted at overdevelopment irregularities, necessary changes or conservation of resources. Green organisations also managed to employ virtually all possible means of communication. Blogs, online petitions, virtual membership in various initiatives, forums, online protests, subscriptions, demonstrations and initiatives organised via social networks form an integral part of the recent trends in civic engagement. Though they have been viewed as alternative means of individual engagement, these are now mainstream mechanisms to channel civic energy and mobilise civic engagement.¹⁴

1.1. Extent of socially-based engagement¹⁵

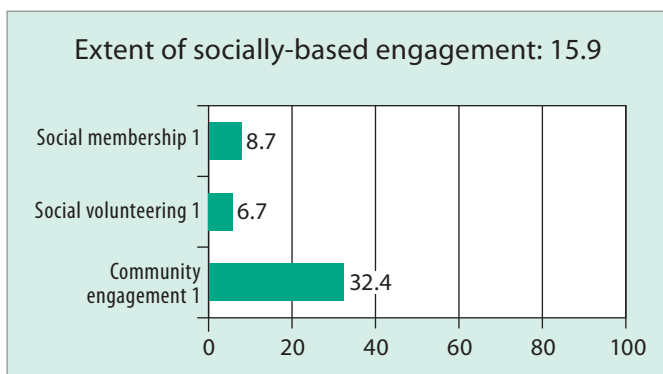


Figure III.1.3. Extent of socially-based engagement

The extent of socially-based engagement is measured by the percentage of those engaged in organisations playing a role in community building. Under the CSI survey methodology, spiritual, religious, educational, artistic, musical and cultural institutions, in addition to sports teams and clubs, are considered to be community organisations.

Of the EVS respondents, 4.8% said they participated in educational, artistic, musical or cultural activities and 4.3% were engaged in sports and

¹⁴ The data from the December, 2007 Eurobarometer report on attitudes of Europeans towards the issue of biodiversity, is an interesting finding presented in the civic engagement case study regarding the ability of environmental organisations to raise public awareness and exercise real impact., http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_219_en.pdf. The survey showed some important differences in the awareness levels of the *Natura 2000* network across EU Member States. The percentages of respondents who reported never having heard of the term *Natura 2000* ranged from 96% in the UK to 19% in Bulgaria. The awareness of the network was the highest among Bulgarian and Finnish respondents with eight out of 10 having heard of the *Natura 2000* network.

¹⁵ Data from the EVS, courtesy of the survey team, were used to form some of the indicators in this dimension.

leisure clubs. The percentage of those not participating in these areas is above 90%, reaching up to 99% for human rights and peace movement organisations. The sectors attracting more than 1% participation are the ones targeting education, social policies and activities for young people.

Table III.1.1. Participation in community organisations

Educational and cultural activities	3.6%
Sports clubs	3.0%
Activities involving young people	1.4%
Social services for older people, people with disabilities and the disadvantaged	1.2%
Religious organisations	1.0%

Special efforts are currently made to promote volunteering in Bulgaria through various initiatives, which include tree planting, working with disadvantaged and institutionalised children, and cleaning parks and nature sites. Various EU programmes also aim to improve this aspect of civic engagement. There is an ongoing campaign to establish an information network of volunteers and to regulate volunteering. Despite the trend towards increasing levels of volunteering, especially among young people (BCNL 2010), the extent of socially-based engagement remains very low. Only 13.1% of all the interviewees in the EVS answered that they volunteered at all.

The socially-based engagement indicator scores 15.9 and reflects the number and type of contacts a person has in his or her spare time, and can be seen as relatively high against the background of low socially-based participation. However, the data show that citizens tend to enclose themselves within their family circle, as well as the internet. Contacts outside this circle, such as with colleagues outside working hours, with acquaintances from one’s religious community or sports clubs, volunteer organisations and social services, are limited.

1.2. Depth of socially-based engagement

This part of the analysis examines the extent to which citizens are actively involved with various civic and community activity and causes. Despite the data indicating a lack of civic engagement in the activities of various organisations, the depth of socially-based engagement shows that those involved in one organisation are likely to join another and, it can be assumed, would support other causes and public initiatives. This suggests

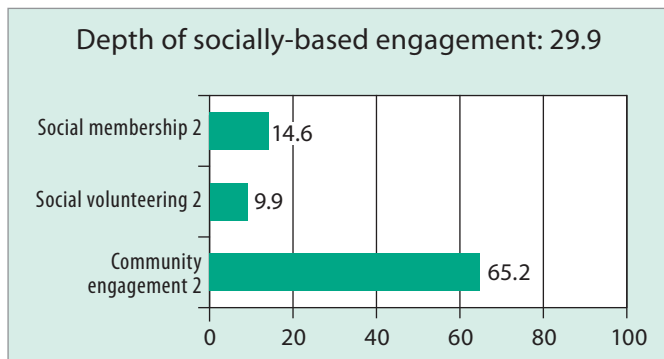


Figure III.1.4. Depth of socially-based engagement

a certain sustainability of socially-based engagement among the people participating in such activities. The same trend is observable with respect to volunteering. Those likely to volunteer once are also potential participants in other initiatives.

Despite their changed position due to reduced state funding, community centres still remain spaces for grassroots activities, and contribute to educational, artistic, musical and cultural initiatives in various locations in Bulgaria, including through activities such as dance and theatre performance, musical schools and painting studios.¹⁶ Community centres attract participation by local citizens in such amateur groups, provide music and dance lessons to students in extra-curriculum time and are seen as cultural centres, especially in smaller towns.

1.3. Diversity of socially-based engagement

An interesting finding within this dimension is how well different groups are represented among the members of various organisations. Summarised data from the EVS and the CSI show high values on this indicator, demonstrating that despite low levels of engagement, those involved come from a wide range of social groups, for example women, disadvantaged people, residents in rural areas, and members of diverse ethnic groups.

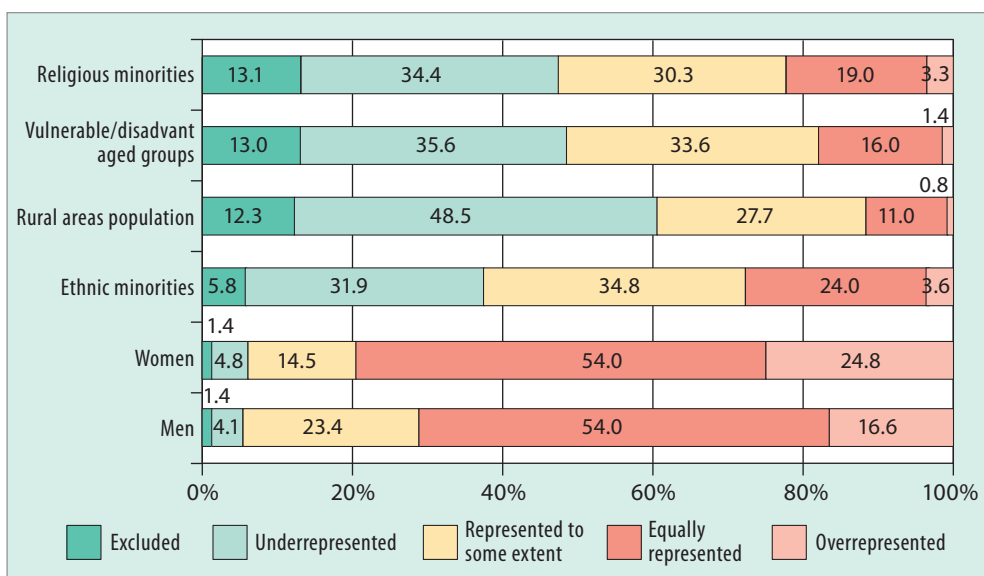


Figure III.1.5. Representation in CSOs by social group

At the same time, however, an additional question to the organisational survey gives another perspective regarding diversity representation. Despite the positive trend towards gender equality in representation, a large part of the organisations

¹⁶ Additional support for community centre activities is provided by the UNDP and the Ministry of Culture with the support of the MATRA Programme and USAID aimed at promoting civil society and civic engagement: http://www.chitalishte.bg/chitalishta_project_view.php?projectid=22

surveyed think that religious and ethnic minorities, disadvantaged people and residents in remote rural areas are rather underrepresented.

1.4. Extent of political engagement

Data on the extent of political engagement is formed by the aggregate data on the forms of participation in organisations playing a role in policy-making, such as trade unions, professional associations, political parties, charities and environmental organisations, as well as data on

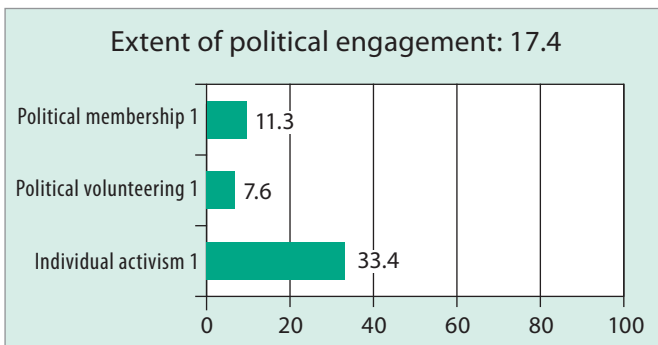


Figure III.1.6. Extent of political engagement

civic engagement in political activities, such as petitions and protests. The representative survey shows that 18.5%, 15.6% and about 5% of citizens have participated in petitions, protests or boycotts respectively. An interesting finding is the readiness to adopt a principled position on issues such as the resolution of certain neighbourhood issues (33.7%), refusing to shop due to poor service (32.3%) and informing law-enforcement in the event of suspicious behaviour (22.2%).

According to the EVS approximately 5%, 4% and 3.6% of the population are members of trade unions, political parties and professional associations, respectively. This may also be related to certain privileges that are conferred by membership in some professional associations and the role trade unions play in representing the interests of members of some professions. In Bulgaria political parties are not considered CSOs and they are governed by different legal and funding regulations, so membership therein does not offer an indicator for civic engagement.

1.5. Depth of political engagement

The depth of political engagement score measures the extent to which there is active engagement with various political organisations and activities, such as trade unions, political parties and movements pursuing certain political goals. The score of 32.3

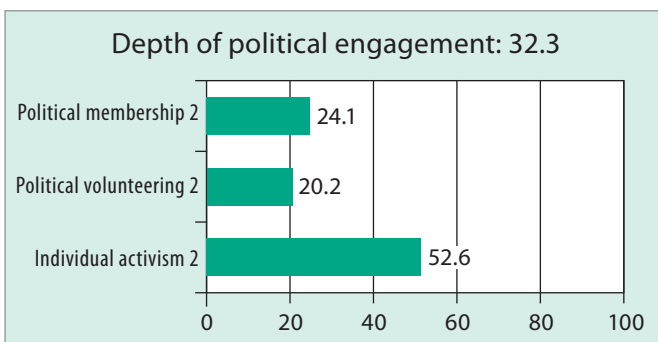


Figure III.1.7. Depth of political engagement

shows a relatively low depth of political engagement, though a bit higher than the indicator for socially-based engagement. This shows that in general there is a greater tendency for citizens to get involved in politically-based organisations. However, it should be noted that the included political engagement through trade unions and political parties does not constitute civic engagement per se. It is also necessary to differentiate between participation in different types of organisations and their respective positions in society. Traditionally, trade unions and professional organisations are viewed as representatives of social and economic groupings and membership is linked to specific benefits. Membership in political parties is associated with a different type of activity and such organisations are not regulated in the same way as typical civic structures. One interesting exception is the Green Party, founded by activists from environmental civic organisations. This group managed to collect the required number of signatures and resources to register for national and European parliament elections in 2009 by raising funds through individual giving at key points in larger cities, online forums and viral mails.¹⁷

1.6. Diversity of political engagement

The diversity of political engagement score for Bulgaria is 76.2 out of 100, indicating wide representation of various groups. This indicator is based on a percentage of respondents in active political membership as a proportion of all members of a selected group in the population survey. These groups include women, members of different socio-economic groups and ethnic minorities. The score is particularly high, especially against the backdrop of the civic engagement indicator. This must, however, raise doubts about the validity of the indicator, as the percentages of those participating is quite low and definite conclusions on the diversity of participation cannot be drawn with confidence. In addition, according to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee¹⁸ there are cases of discrimination against the interests of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged people in political representation. Gender balance in political representation is still not fully secured in practice. Although there is a growing trend of representation of women, it is still low; for example, in the recent National Assembly 22.08% of representatives are women.¹⁹

Conclusion

The data on the civic engagement dimension provide confirmation for our suspicions regarding the trend towards limited civic engagement and lack of activity and involvement in activities and organisations in Bulgaria. This is one of the weaknesses

¹⁷ The threshold for participation in the elections was around €25,000.

¹⁸ The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee is an independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights. For more information: <http://bghelsinki.org/index.php?lg=en>

¹⁹ Distribution of Members of Parliament of the 41st National Assembly by Gender: <http://www.parliament.bg/en/statistics>

of Bulgaria’s civil society. The responses given to an additional panel of questions under the project uncover new insight into this non-participation, namely a preference for other types of activity and motivation beyond the abstract civic interest, which, given the right mobilisation approach, even for a short period, could help to achieve certain goals.

Personal motivation serves as the major mobiliser of civic engagement.²⁰ As shown in the figure below (data from additions to the population survey), citizens are likely to take part in an initiative where their personal interests are at stake.

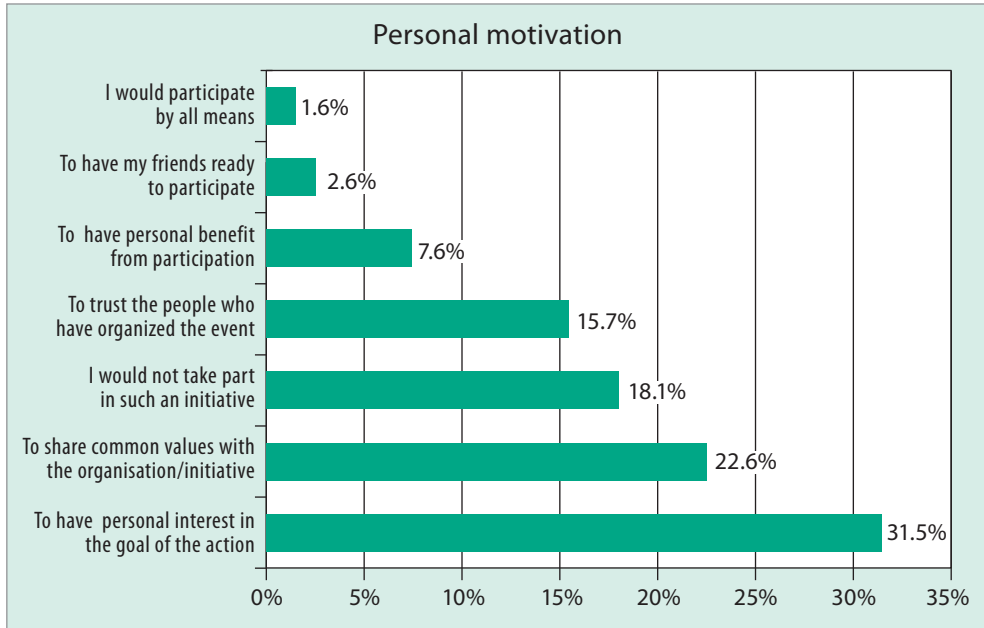


Figure III.1.8. Personal motivation for participation

Further, in the survey, in hypothetical cases where personal damage had been inflicted by an institution, citizens said they were ready to file a complaint and complain to the institutional head. However, the extra data in the population survey reveals that when actual damage was inflicted, more than half of citizens failed to take action because they believed there would not be any outcome at all, and/or because they did not have the time.

Only a small portion of people who had been directly affected by an institution had taken action, i.e. filed complaints or signed a petition, although they generally believed this did not achieve any results. The lack of actual results additionally depresses motivation for people to take action in the future.

Another source of mobilisation for civic engagement is trust in various CSOs. People primarily trust organisations that represent the interests of a given social

²⁰ Case study on Civic engagement, Appendix 3.

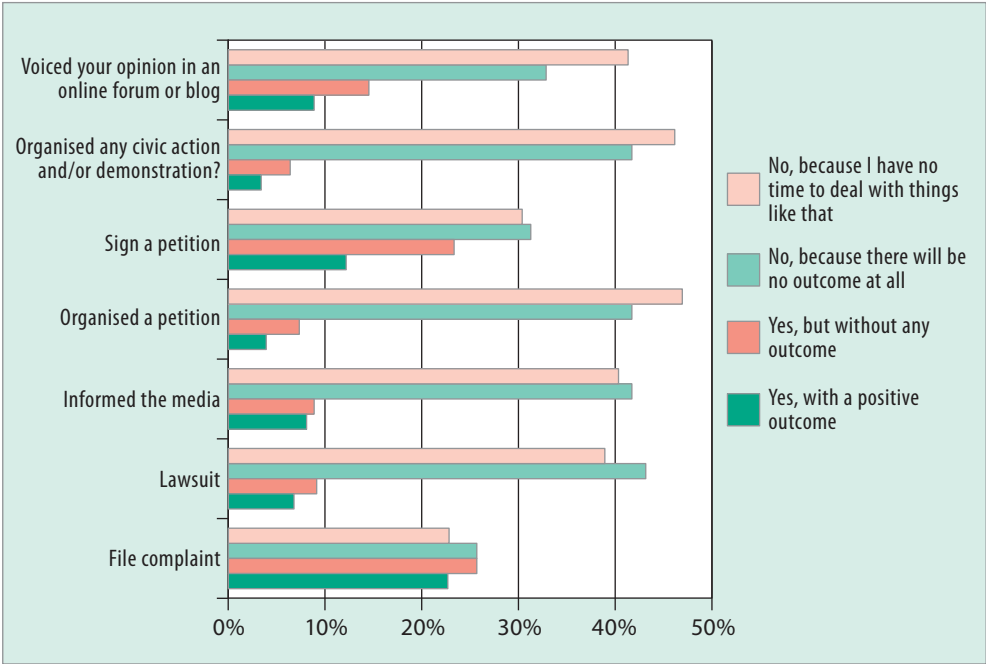


Figure III.1.9. When harmed by an institution, have you taken any action?

group, have a dialogue with citizens, advocate for certain rights and policies and have a large membership. In responses to survey questions, these are the main conditions that legitimise the existence of a given CSO. The data also show that under certain conditions people’s passivity about participating in civic initiatives could be overcome if the cause is effective and visible. A positive case here is the change within Bulgaria’s environmental movement observed since the last phase of the CSI. It evolved from individual protests to an organised movement with political representation. It is based on voluntary actions, flash mobs, online mobilisation, viral mails, online petitions and social networks, which ensure sustained individual civic engagement. Its supporters are primarily young, educated people who live in bigger cities. The green cause also served to unify various NGOs, to create a mechanism for civic representation in various government bodies and to make the issue easily recognisable and visible for the wider public through the campaign’s face, the FortheNature coalition.²¹

2. Level of Organisation

The sector’s Level of Organisation score gives an indication of the institutionalisation of CSOs, the sustainability of relationships between various representatives, the available technological and financial resources and the established channels of interaction that allow for the establishment of the necessary civil society infrastructure.

²¹ <http://en.forthenature.org/campaign/26/Essence>

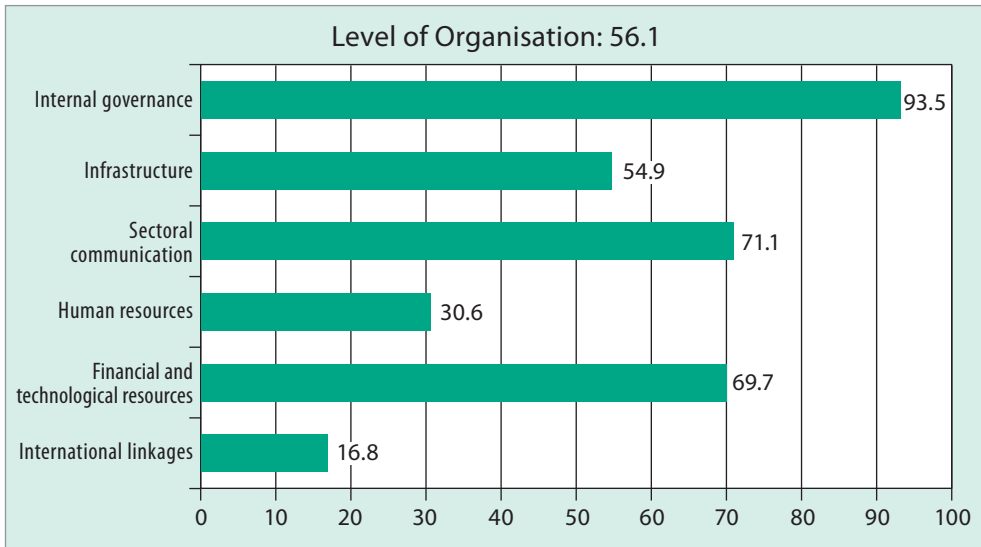


Figure III.2.1. Level of Organisation scores

The CSI data reveals the following main findings within this dimension:

- CSOs consider their internal governance and management methods democratic and transparent.
- There are established channels of sectoral communication and interaction between different stakeholders in the sector.
- The civil society infrastructure consists of national-level coalitions, forums and platforms; however, these institutions are not yet fully sustainable.
- The sector is characterised by fragility of human personnel, and reliance on volunteering and work outside of business hours.
- The sector demonstrated that it was relatively well provided-for in terms of technology; organisations stated that they had regular internet and LAN line access.
- Even though the sub-indicator shows financial sustainability, quality checks and secondary sources indicate a reverse trend, which raises doubts about the validity of the data from the organisational survey questions. For this reason secondary resources and national statistics also serve as key sources of information.
- There is a lack of substantial international linkages.
- There is a trend, albeit incipient, towards seeking to establish contacts with European platforms of organisations, which relates to considerations of infrastructure and sectoral communication.

2.1. Internal governance

To achieve sustainability and coherence in their activities, it is key for CSOs to have good structure and management, as well as quality personnel and working

methods. The summarised values show high results for internal governance mechanisms. Over 90% of organisations surveyed indicated they were managed by a board of trustees, a managing board or supervisory board. Regarding the decision-making process, 33.1% of respondents claimed their organisations were run by an elected manager, with another 25.8% run by an elected board of trustees, and 20.0% run by an appointed director.

Such structures within a CSO confer legitimacy on organisations and decisions, perform representative functions and provide public oversight for an organisation's strategic course. As a rule they include prominent public figures and representatives from business, the media and universities. The role of such structures is crucial for the good management of an organisation; adherence to rules and code of conduct; compliance with ethical principles and norms; and organisation policies regarding labour rules, personnel sustainability and internal organisational structure. The potential for development of a given organisation depends on the strategic interactions between the board of trustees or managing board and the operational team.

However, in the case of Bulgaria, the presence of such structures is not yet a guarantee of an organisation's strategic sustainability and functioning internal governance system. The latest attempts of the Civic Participation Forum and the Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundations, BCNL and the Institute for Market Economics (IME) to introduce good governance standards and revive the idea of a code of ethics and standard of consultation are a step in the right direction. While it should be noted that they are valid for only a part of the sector, at the same time they are a precondition for the positive identification of organisations that do not want to exist in a vacuum and which aim to improve the sector's image.

Summary of case study on perception of impact (Appendix 3)

Selection of representatives of NGOs operating in the field of sustainable development and the environment - The BlueLink Network tool, <http://vote.bluelink.net/>

The so called civil e-representation is an internet-based platform for the selection of NGO representatives to various working groups and committees of institutions dealing with sustainable development and environmental issues. The goal of this electronic platform is to support citizen participation in the decision-making process by the creation of a transparent, accessible and flexible internet-based platform for the selection of environmental organisation representatives to various bodies and institutions. In order to effectively participate in this process, NGOs should register in the manner specified by the platform. The procedure for the selection of NGO representatives has been endorsed at the National Conference of NGOs operating in the field of sustainable development and the environment, held in 2002.

2.2. Support infrastructure

The establishment of successful partnerships between CSOs is a precondition for the sector's consolidation in order to achieve common goals and policies and to develop sustainable relationships between organisations. The results show that, in Bulgaria, organisations have not yet fully adopted the basics of networking and coalition building. Networking is not yet established as a common strategy of interaction, despite existing awareness of the need to form coalitions in order to have a real impact on policy and decision making. Of respondent organisations, 54.9% claim they are official members of federations, coalitions and networks, but it should be noted that in most cases there are doubts about whether such membership is fully sustainable. For example, the most commonly cited examples of such participation are the thematic groupings (families) in various domains. These do not constitute umbrella organisations or networks, but instead represent voluntarily gathered individual CSOs that organise and manage the coalition on a rotation basis, and which do not constitute a separate legal entity. In addition, these coalitions act primarily on an ad-hoc basis. Further efforts to consolidate CSOs in sectors will be necessary in order to provide a better support infrastructure.

The attempts made by the Open Society Institute – Sofia to form coalitions did not achieve fully sustainable results.²² Some coalitions, like ForTheNature or the Social platform managed to coordinate member CSOs and to sustain interest in common activities. The others did not succeed fully in preserving this type of infrastructure due to the lack of efficient coordination and prioritisation.

A more recent attempt to this end was the initiation of the Civic Engagement Forum. It is a non-institutionalised platform of about 60 CSOs, so again its organisation is horizontal and has no formal structures, gathering various CSOs which elect a rotating lead organisation and establish working groups on issues of common interest. The overall goal is to unite efforts for joint actions aimed at increasing civil society's participation in decision-making at the local and national levels and improving the interaction of the non-governmental sector with public authorities. Such initiatives show the need for consolidation in order to achieve greater impact and effectiveness of civil society activities. However, questions remain as to whether this trend will continue and will become a sustainable mechanism for the civil society sector.

²² A Consortium (Open Society Institute – Sofia, Foundation for Local Government Reform, the Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation and the BlueLink Network, with the support of the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe) conducted the project to establish families of not-for-profit organisations in Bulgaria. This was a voluntary undertaking to consolidate the non-governmental sector based on themes, in order to participate more effectively in decision-making and advocacy to influence policy-making at local, national and, then, EU levels. In 2005 and 2006 six families were formed. Priorities for work, together with established communication and decision-making mechanisms, were set in the relevant thematic areas. The coalitions were as follows: ENGOs Coalition, Human Rights Family, Social Policy Family, Media Family, Regional and Local Development Family, Arts and Culture Family.

Participation in European institutions is also not a priority for Bulgarian non-governmental organisations. Only around one-fifth of respondents reported participating in EU-level platforms, while (79.3% responded 'no'. This shows that there is a great distance between Bulgarian CSOs and decision-making at the EU level, where 50% to 80% of legislation that affects domestic issues is adopted, particularly in important areas such as the environment, regional development, the economy, international development, social policy, agriculture and regional cohesion. This is indicative of the latent potential for further coalitions and networking.

2.3. Sectoral communication

Another aspect of civic infrastructure formation is the presence of established channels for interaction, exchange of information and meetings between representatives of civil society organisations. This indicator is based on the data from the organisational survey, which asked about the actual exchange of information, documents and data, and meetings held in the past three months. Almost 71% of respondent organisations stated that they had conducted intrasectoral working meetings with other organisations in the last three months (sectoral communication 1 indicator). A similar percentage of organisations had exchanged information with other organisations over the same period (sectoral communication 2 indicator).

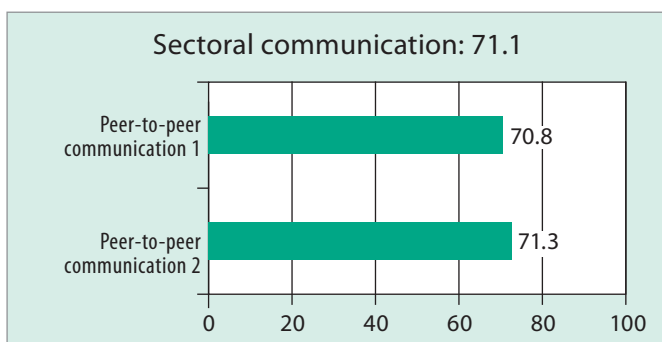


Figure III.2.2. Sectoral communication

they had conducted intrasectoral working meetings with other organisations in the last three months (sectoral communication 1 indicator). A similar percentage of organisations had exchanged information with other organisations over the same period (sectoral communication 2 indicator).

This is a positive development compared to the previous study when intrasectoral communication was considered a problem. Initiatives for legislative amendments, joint actions and advocacy campaigns are becoming more common. Examples include ForTheNature coalition, which unites over 30 environmental organisations; Civic Engagement Forum and its special working groups (for drafting rules of consultation, analysis of the opportunities for civic participation in decision-making, participation in the next stage of structural funds programming, drafting a code of ethics); the Workshop For Civic Initiatives Foundation for development of good governance standards; coalition for monitoring the management of the EU funds; National Network for Children; Coalition for Sustainable EU funds; and attempts to improve the milieu for civic engagement through information and practices exchange via the newly-launched portal for non-governmental organisations.²³ However, temporary

²³ Bulgarian Non-governmental Organisations Information Portal at: www.ngoinfo.bg

initiatives still dominate, and communication is somewhat insufficiently structured. Even though there has been some improvement and an awareness of the need for a more structured and strategic interaction between CSOs, the potential for transforming communication into a strategic partnership mechanism is not fully harnessed.

2.4. Human resources

This indicator explores the human resources available for CSOs to achieve their objectives and how adequate they are perceived by CSOs. The score of 30.6 is formed by the data in the organisational survey. This is comparatively low, which means that staffing is problematic for CSOs. A high percentage of organisations reported working with volunteers. The number of volunteers indicated by the respondent organisations (including all people who are not permanent staff members) is significantly higher than the number of permanent staff. Even though this is a positive trend, the use of volunteers in the work of CSOs in Bulgaria is still underdeveloped. Volunteering in Bulgaria is only now starting to emerge as a practice, and the legal framework proposed by the BCNL is in development. The proposed law defines volunteering in the following manner: “volunteering shall be an activity outside of labour and official legal relations performed by a natural person by their own will and without compensation to the benefit of not-for-profit entities, local and government bodies.”²⁴

Given the project-based operation of most CSOs, a large portion of staff are employed under temporary contracts or do work for multiple organisations. Employment in the civil society sector is characterised by instability and a variable workload, which can be directly linked to the problematic funding of the sector. This is also confirmed by the 2006 BCNL study, which showed that 37% of NGOs had no permanent staff. In 40% of cases where there were permanent staff, the organisation maintained between just one and four employees.

Given the expert nature of the majority of NGOs, the trainings completed, experience gained with international donors, and specific project-implementation skills, those employed in the sector are both well-educated and qualified. This allows for some migration from the non-governmental sector to the consultancy or private sectors and particularly to political parties, especially at the time of elections when parties need staff. Overall, employment in the non-governmental sector proves to be unsustainable, and organisations fail to retain well-trained and specialised staff.

2.5. Financial and technological resources

According to the survey, CSOs are well provided-for in terms of office equipment, LAN lines and internet access. Over 70% of organisations stated they had their own LAN line or mobile phone and a computer, which they used for the organisation’s purposes. Sixty-eight percent had permanent internet access. About half also

²⁴ BCNL draft on the Volunteering legal act: <http://www.bcnl.org/bg/articles/635-2006-npoeкм-за-закон-за-доброволчеството.html>

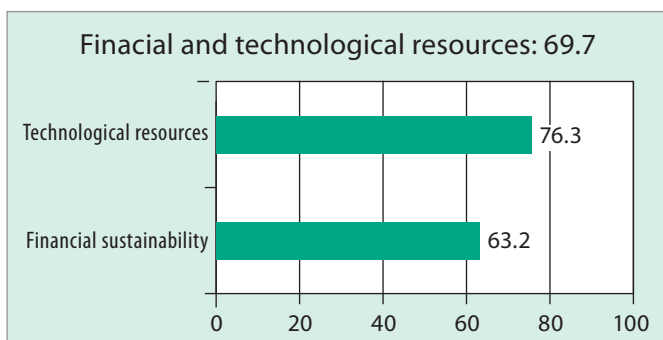


Figure III.2.3. Financial and technological resources

had fax machines. The organisational survey also identified cases where organisations had no office, meaning staff worked from home or used a mobile phone for communication. On average, about one quarter of organisations stated they had no LAN line, PC or internet access.

Regarding the issue of financial resources, there is an interesting comparison between organisations' expenses and revenues. The findings were as follows: 44.1% of respondents reported that the expenses of their organisations had increased as compared to the previous year, whereas 46.1% and 9.9% stated that expenses had remained unchanged or had decreased, respectively. Regarding revenues, 23.5% said their revenues had increased; however, 47.7% of respondents stated that their revenues had remained unchanged and 28.8% reported that their revenues had declined. The difference between the percentage of declined revenues and that of expenses shows a gap, and resulting financial instability. This gap is coupled with the altered funding environment for CSOs following Bulgaria's accession to the EU and the corresponding withdrawal of many international donors. National Operational Programmes (which manage the EU funds on national level according to EU regulations) and European Commission-administered horizontal programmes remain the main funding source for CSOs. These circumstances create difficulties for CSOs for several reasons: 1) EU funds have different mechanisms, approaches and rules for receiving funding; 2) CSOs often need co-financing; and 3) there have been delays and issues with payments under the Operational Programmes. This affects the motivation of those working in organisations to apply under these programmes, which can contribute to the migration of already trained staff to other sectors such as consultancy. This hinders the adequate functioning of CSOs and their development, as well as their ability to impact government and to initiate policy change and enhance accountability of public policies.²⁵

According to NSI data, revenues of associations and foundations have increased between 2005 and 2008. The total revenues for 2005 and 2009 are approximately €120,191,500 and €209,029,900, respectively, which indicates a significant increase over the four years. However, the ratio for 2008 and 2009 shows that the economic crisis affected CSOs revenue. In 2009 there is an even worse picture, with a negative balance and a stagnation in revenue compared to 2008.

²⁵ The environment change resulting from Bulgaria's EU accession is analysed specifically at the end of this report.

As for the sources of funding, there is a relative increase in donations as a share of revenues. Economic activities, such as public procurement and provisions of services, also account for an increasing portion of civil society revenues. Regarding charity for 2009, business makes about 70% of all donations, indicating a positive development of corporate social responsibility. In 2008, companies and citizens in Bulgaria donated some 20 million Euro, and in 2007 at least 15 million Euro, which is 15% more than 2006. Half of Bulgarians and over 65% of companies make donations, and this percentage is increasing. For 2009, over 45 million leva (€22,500,000) was donated through various campaigns, which sustains the trend, though with some limitations due to the financial crisis. (Bulgarian Donors Forum 2010)

The organisational survey did not provide clear data on funding sources. The aggregate index values show reasonable financial sustainability, but secondary data (NGO Sustainability 2009) show instability and problems in this domain. Issues include the distribution of resources, the common perception of corruption, the available data about 'conflict of interest cases' (CSD 2008 and 2010) and inappropriate uses of the resources provided.

Summary of case study on level of organisation – fund-raising through text campaigns (Appendix 3)

Fund-raising through text campaigns represents a growing trend in donations. According to the Bulgarian Donors Forum, for 2008 it represents 6.25% of the total number of donations. The Donor Messaging Service (DMS) has accumulated 250,000 texts for 2009 and around 750,000 texts for 2010. Though there is a positive trend, still issues of consideration exist concerning accountability and transparency in text campaigns. Further efforts to strengthen DMS as an efficient model for text campaigning are necessary and advocacy to make it VAT exempt is undergoing in order to strengthen this tool as a proper fund-raising mechanism.

2.6. International linkages

The ratio between the number of international NGOs registered in Bulgaria and the total number of NGOs registered in Bulgaria was calculated using data from the Union of International Associations.²⁶ This indicator has the lowest value in this dimension, which is consistent with our findings regarding limited networking and partnerships between Bulgarian CSOs, and international NGOs and European entities. Even though a specific need has been recognised, such cooperation is underdeveloped and the international linkages to Bulgarian CSOs remain limited.

²⁶ OSI-Sofia and CIVICUS are grateful to the Union of International Associations for this information.

Conclusion

The study tells us that the typical organisation in Bulgaria is relatively small, focused on a single area, and often communicates and exchanges information with other organisations. In most cases, however, Bulgarian CSOs do not network routinely. They have limited financial resources and temporary human personnel, despite being well-equipped with technology.

Communication opportunities are yet to be fully utilised for the sector’s consolidation and its transformation into a sustainable and noteworthy actor in society with a corresponding infrastructure and routine sectoral communication. Financial sustainability remains a major issue and is directly linked to mechanisms to streamline the accountability of public resources allocation.

Since civil society development in Bulgaria has been the result of strong top-down influences, with both financial and logistical support from abroad, and with little grassroots input, questions remain as to whether the relatively high level of organisation is combined with legitimacy and a mandate for representation from the public.

3. Practice of Values

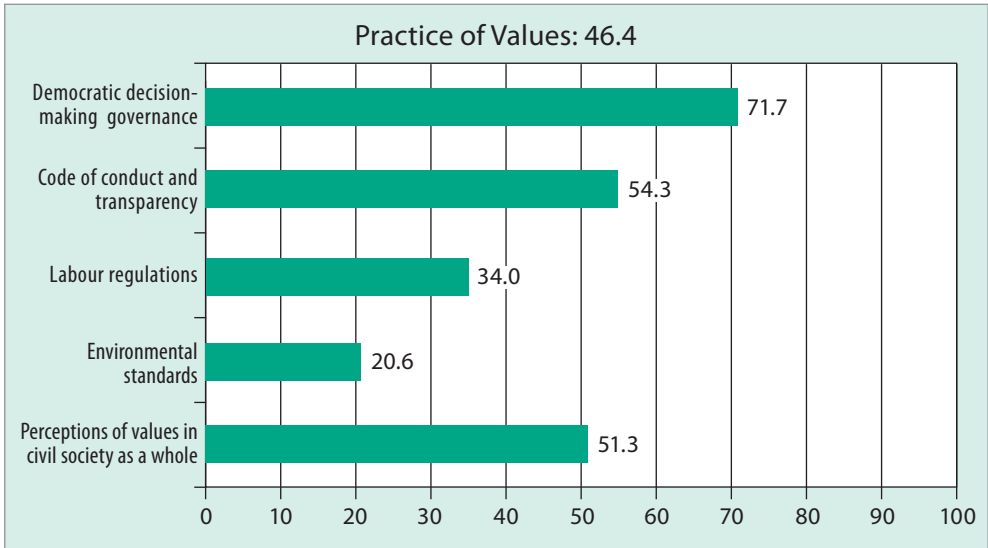


Figure III.3.1. Practice of Values scores

The CSI defines civil society values by their activities, structures, functioning and rules. This illustrates the values fostered and practiced by the organised part of civil society. The practice of values score is measured through questions on the CSI organisational survey, which provide insight into civil society’s adherence to certain values, and information regarding standards, codes of conduct and the perceptions of civil society’s values. Based on the aggregate data we find the following trends:

- There is high internal perception of democratic decision-making practices and principles in CSOs.
 - There is a positive trend within CSOs towards the development of rules and standards of work, as well as environmental policies and management standards.
 - Civil society representatives consider the environment in which they operate to be democratic, with only limited cases of violence or intolerance.
 - Though CSOs in Bulgaria perceive themselves as holding strong values, there are considerable issues regarding corruption that raise questions about the legitimacy of CSO activities and operation.
 - While CSOs perceive values to be desirable, applying ethical standards to their work is often difficult in practice.
 - More efforts are necessary to set up a framework of conduct, a code of ethics and a code of conduct for CSOs.

Bulgaria scores relatively high on the values dimension of the CSI. The score is 46.4 on a scale from 0 to 100. The primary indicators of the dimension show the extent to which major principles and values are fostered in the work and management of civil society organisations in Bulgaria.

3.1. Democratic governance

Democratic governance is measured by responses to the question “Who makes the principal decisions in your organisation?” The democratic election of managers, boards of trustees, and the power of members to make decisions on the part of an organisation by virtue of being elected or being an active part of their organisations, is an indicator of democratic decision-making. Respondents indicated that decisions are made most often by an elected manager (33.1%) or an elected board of trustees (25.8%). Another 7.9% of respondents indicated that the members of organisations are included in the decision-making process. The remaining responses indicated that either an appointed manager or an appointed board of trustees made decisions. In addition, when asked “To what extent is democratic decision-making encouraged in your organisation?” 75.7% of respondents answered that it played a “significant” role.

3.2. Labour regulations

The organisational survey questions relating to labour regulations aim to assess the manner in which CSOs adopt certain labour practices and values in their activities. The data examine the distribution of equal opportunities in organisations, the percentages of employees who are members of trade unions, whether the organisations’ policies on labour standards are publicly accessible, and if any training on labour rights and opportunities is provided to new staff members.

We find that labour regulations are not fully developed in Bulgarian civil society. Overall, as compared to other categories on the values dimension, labour regulations

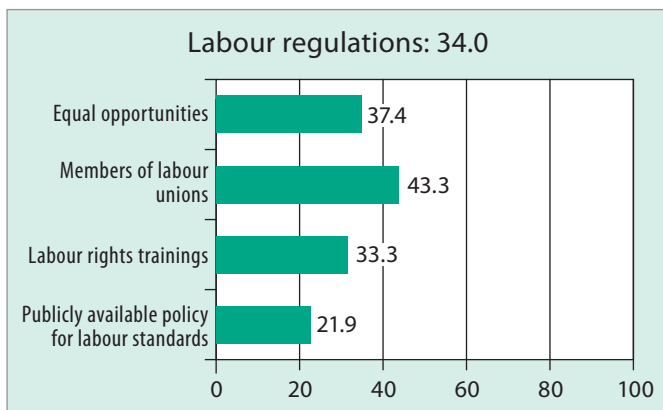


Figure III.3.2. Labour regulations

Approximately 70% of civil society organisations stated that they had no publicly accessible policies on labour rights. Asked if they provided new staff members with specialised training on labour rights and opportunities in the workplace, only 33.3% answered positively.

Further efforts are needed on the part of CSOs to ensure rules of equal opportunity and pay are followed. Asked if they had rules for equal opportunity, approximately 56% answered “no” and 7.7% answered “I don’t know.” According to the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (2010) female-supported households are about 20% poorer than male-supported households; in 2009 women on the whole received 15.7 % less income than men. This calls for CSOs to take a more active role in implementing equal opportunity and pay rules.

3.3. Code of conduct and transparency

Aggregate data on the presence of an organisational code of conduct and transparency of activities show that this indicator is among those scoring the highest at 54.3. This category is based on two sub-indicators, whether the organisation has a publicly available code of conduct and the transparency of the organisation’s financial accountability. These indicators examine the extent to which organisations

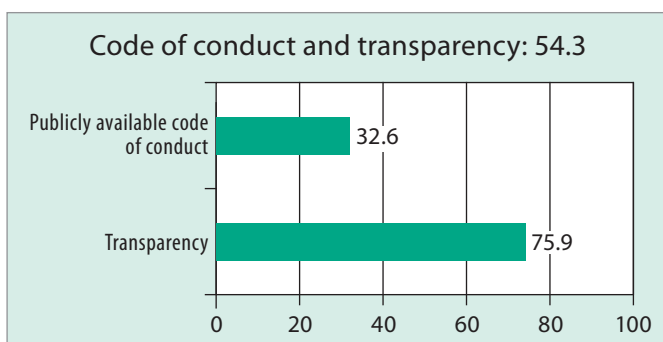


Figure III.3.3. Code of conduct and transparency

has a relatively low score of 34.0. It can be said that this is largely due to a lack of awareness of the need for specific labour norms and rules within the civil society sector, where membership in a trade union is viewed as a necessary or functional mechanism to guarantee the rights of those employed in the sector.

Approximately 70% of

use formal written documents outlining their respective purposes, vision, values and code of conduct, as well as how publicly available these documents are. The results relating to public availability of a code of conduct show that 32.6% of organisations have

such documents publicly available. Regarding the financial information of CSOs, 75.9% of respondent organisations answered that they made financial information publicly available. The study shows that the information is either published on the organisation's website (14.1%), in public registers (22.4%) or, in most cases, can be found the organisation's office (56.4%).

The publication of data is still problematic, given that the percentage of organisations publishing the information on their websites is only 14.1% and the information contained in the public register kept by the Ministry of Justice is difficult to access. Further, the public register does not show the organisations' principal activities, nor does it list correct information contained in their annual financial statements, changes made to their governing bodies or periods of activity (BCNL 2009-2010). This renders pointless the official differentiation, from the point of view of appearing on the public register between nonprofit organisations working for public or private benefit. These shortcomings in the functioning of the public register hinder CSOs' accountability to the public. Given the importance of their public role, CSOs should keep immaculate records to allow public scrutiny of their activities. Improving the visibility of CSOs activities and funding sources would serve to create a better image of the sector.

The issue with the public image has proven problematic in recent studies (Market Links 2005). CSOs are not considered as fulfilling citizens' interests and their legitimacy is at stake. There is still a significant gap between CSOs' mission statement and the citizens' mandate. As discussed in other sections, citizens prefer informal activism, rather than the traditional participation in the structures of civil society. In addition, the CSOs are the unknown face in the public arena; their activities lack visibility and common citizens' understanding, which results in relatively low public trust.

3.4. Environmental standards

Unlike the 2003-2005 study, this study includes an indicator for the adoption of environmental standards by organisations, and not only by environmental organisations. This is examined primarily through the presence of written rules and standards defining an organisation's work and showing a certain level of awareness of environmental issues. According to the study, one fifth of CSOs (20.6%) stated that they had publicly available policies on the adherence to certain environmental and conservation standards. However, the percentage rose by 6.4% when organisations were asked if they had any future plans to draw up such publicly available environmental policies. This also reflects an increasing awareness and popularity of the 'green office' concept.

In addition, environmental organisations as a sector are growing and their activities are becoming more popular, which drives a greater awareness of environmental standards and sustainability. Environmental CSOs are considered by respondents in the population, organisational and external perception surveys as one of the most visible and well-organised segments of CSOs.

3.5. Perception of values in civil society as a whole

This category examines several indicators associated primarily with the understanding of values in civil society as a whole: the attitudes of CSOs towards violence, intolerance and corruption and how this relates to their manifestation within civil society. We surveyed the extent to which civil society recognises and attaches importance to intolerant groups, as well as whether CSOs take a stance and carry any weight in promoting non-violence and peace throughout society. For these indicators Bulgarian civil society scores 51.3 out of 100, a relatively good result. Of the sub-indicators (Figure III.3.4), internal democracy scores the highest. Asked to what extent civil society as a whole encourages democratic decision-making in its sector, 75.7% of respondents answered “considerably.”

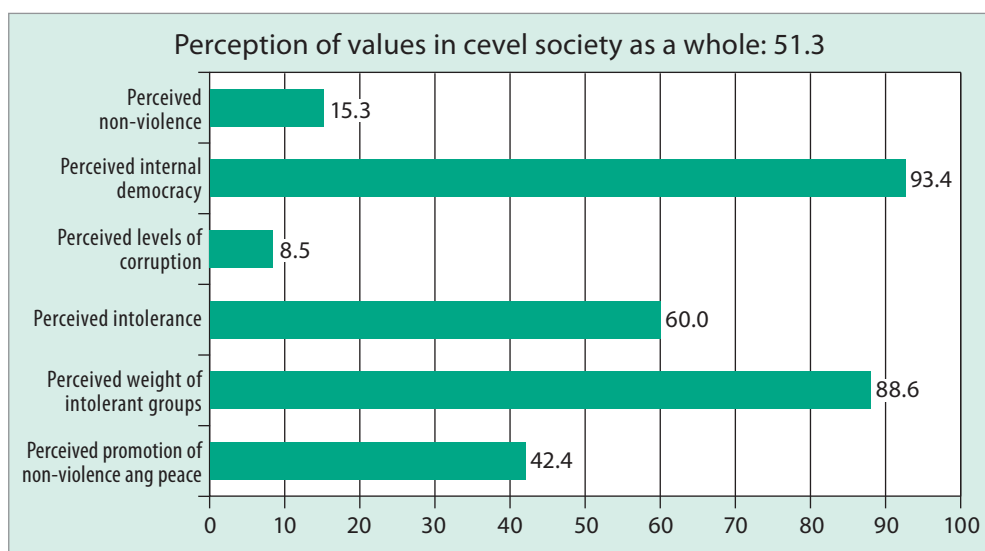


Figure III.3.4. Perception of values in civil society as a whole

The perception of values in civil society is also formed by CSOs' views of groups that demonstrate violence and intolerance in the public domain for the purpose of promoting certain interests. Such cases are considered to be marginal to civil society in Bulgaria by about two-thirds of respondents in the organisational survey (66.4%). When such activities have been observed, these practices can be described as “Separate cases of groups which often use violence” or “Individual groups which rarely use violence.” This was registered by respondents as an uncommon occurrence and was strictly linked to the “separate/random groups” category. When asked specifically to name any racist and discriminatory groups in society, respondents gave more varied answers. “One or two cases” accounts for the largest portion of answers (29.5%) followed by “Several” (23.7%), “None” (16.7%) and “Many” (7.1%), while 23.1% of respondents answered “I don't know.” This picture is supplemented by answers relating to the weight that these groups carry in civil society. The respondents that

assess these groups as isolated cases of marginal significance to the sector are the prevailing (27.6%, 22.4% respectively, with 39.1% responding “do not know”). This shows that these groups do not occupy a mainstream position in civil society. Another finding is CSOs’ perception of their role in promoting non-violence and peace, with 57.6% of the respondent CSOs viewing it as “insignificant” or “limited,” while 42.3% define it as “moderate” or “significant.” This illustrates that CSOs’ impact in this regard is still limited.

In the organisational survey, 36.4% of the respondent CSOs described corruption practices in civil society as “common,” 20.2% answered they were “very common” and 34.9% saw them as “isolated cases.” The majority of respondents expressed concern regarding the way civil society functions in Bulgaria. The following were identified as the most common examples of NGO participation in corruption schemes: dependency on government structures, misappropriation, illegal absorption of EU funds and public procurement procedures. This means that there are challenges accumulating in the area of government-citizen relations where civil society as a sector is plagued by conflicts of interest, rent-seeking and a lack of transparency (CSD, 2010).²⁷

Conclusion

The results for this dimension show that CSOs perceive themselves to be promoters of the values which promote a sustainable and mature civil society. However, it is still unclear how civil society will implement, promote and sustain best practices and rules.

While CSOs consider democratic governance a positive feature of the sector, labour regulations and environmental standards do not enjoy a sustainable position among CSO policies. Challenges exist in ensuring the transparency of CSO activities and in enhancing their codes of conduct. This is partly related to the problematic functioning of the Public Registry at the Ministry of Justice, but also to issues of CSO funding in Bulgaria.

CSOs still struggle with issues of legitimacy, a problematic image, relatively low public trust and weak links to their constituencies. Further measures are needed in order to address public image deficiencies that relate to the CSOs public mandate and legitimacy and to secure transparency and accountability of the sector and provide for a greater practice of values.

²⁷ The potential for irregularities and corruption practices in civil society, which are often mentioned by the public with regard to civil society in Bulgaria, required an additional panel of questions addressed to representatives of CSOs. These will be discussed in a separate part of this report.

4. Perception of Impact

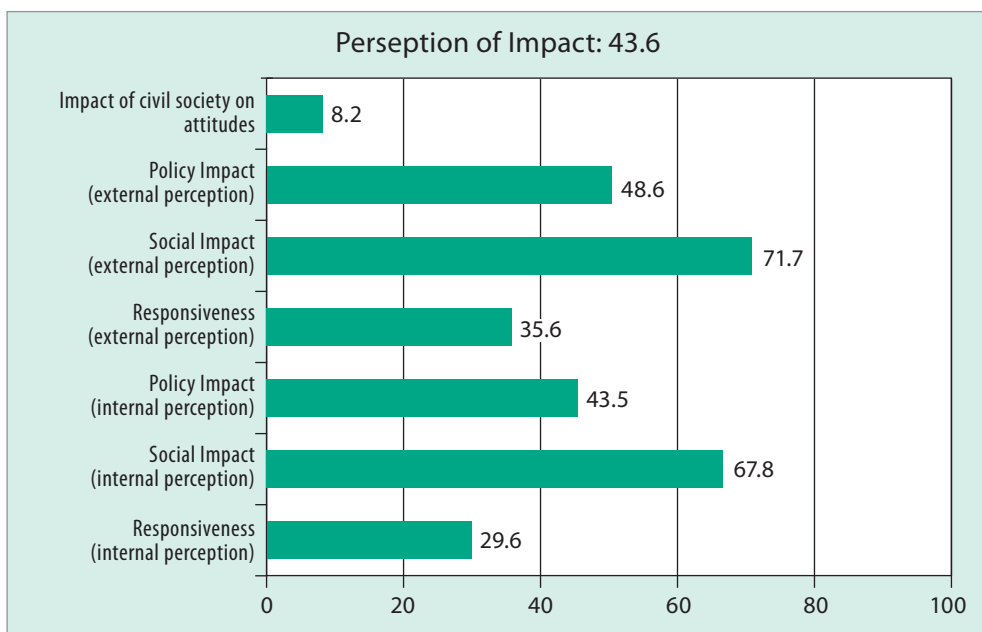


Figure III.4.1. Perception of impact

Perception of impact indicates the extent to which CSOs feel they are able to improve policies and services, initiate changes to law, encourage the transparency and accountability of government officials, and monitor policy implementation. Impact depends on various factors, both legislative and institutional, as well as on the ability of CSOs to coordinate their efforts to achieve common goals, provided there is a favourable environment for civil society-government dynamics. At the same time the extent of impact is determined by the analytical, institutional and financial capacity of CSOs, and their potential to partner with relevant institutions and represent the public's interests, while mobilising the public around important issues.

The total for this dimension is based on two different perspectives, the CSI organisational survey which measures the perspective from within civil society, and the external perception survey which measures the view from without. This allows for comparison of the two perspectives and adds to the validity of the findings. On this dimension Bulgaria scores a total of 43.6. Disaggregated by indicator, the data show:

- Limited ability of civil society representatives to address certain public needs, and to impact positively on serious societal issues and public attitudes.
- Limited impact on policy making and implementation.
- CSOs are faced with challenges in advocating effectively and influencing policy making and implementation.

- Civil society and its activities are viewed as necessary actors in social processes.
- In some sectors, such as education, the environment and support for vulnerable groups, civil society’s activities are considerably more effective and visible than in other areas.

Perception of impact measures the extent to which civil society manages to deliver on public priorities and influence policy making. The strength of civil society can be evidenced by an increase in potential partnerships between citizens and CSOs, as well as between the CSOs and the government. As a result, a major achievement would be a continuous dialogue with local, national and European actors, by which civil society strengthens its status in decision-making as a fully-fledged partner in governance. Civil society’s participation in decision-making has the following benefits: it improves the quality of decisions made by institutions; the decisions made include various viewpoints (BCNL 2009) and citizens are more likely to take into account and abide by the decisions made, since they have taken part in their formulation. This dimension seeks to address questions related to the challenges and trends in this area. In Bulgaria, however, the level of impact is still obstructed by the lack of clear-cut CSOs-government framework, which allows for relative arbitrariness. Though some legislation that allows CSOs participation in decision and policy-making is in place and standards for consultations are adopted, this seems not to be enough to streamline routine public consultations subject to uniform rules (BCNL 2009).

4.1 and 4.4. Responsiveness (internal and external perception)

This indicator outlines the extent to which CSOs are able to impact on addressing of main societal issues. According to the three surveys conducted under the CSI, the main areas of social concern in Bulgaria in early 2009 were corruption, unemployment and income. The impact of civil society on these areas is considered to be “limited” by both CSOs

and experts surveyed. In this case the internal and external perceptions of impact coincide, with the aggregate score showing similar levels of assessment. In the organisational survey civil society’s impact on the two major social concerns, corruption and poverty / low income, score relatively equally

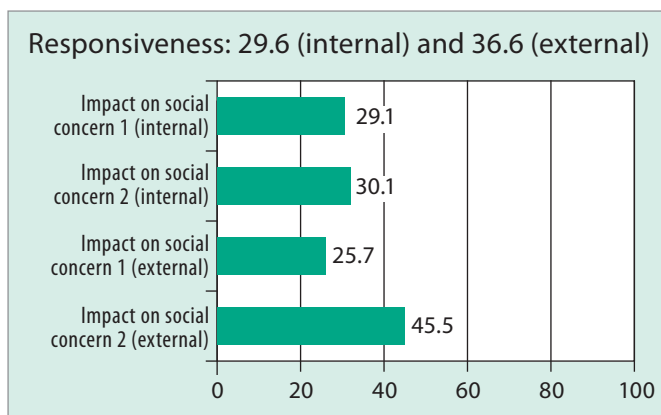


Figure III.4.2. Responsiveness of CSOs

at 29.1 and 30.1. However, the external perception survey shows that the impact of civil society is seen as much greater with respect to resolving social issues (poverty and low income) as compared to corruption (scores of 25.7 versus 45.5).

4.2 and 4.5. Social impact (internal and external perception)

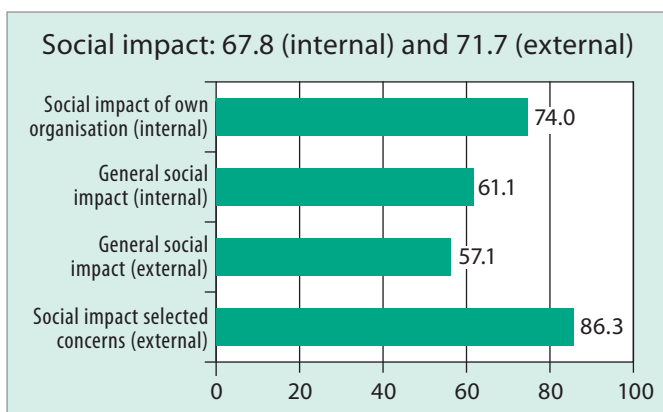


Figure III.4.3. Social impact of CSOs

find several inconsistencies in specific aspects of this measure, notably when looking at the weight of individual sectors and the effect of activities.

The external perception survey shows that civil society takes an active stance on environmental issues (21.3%), support for vulnerable groups (21.3%), societal development (16.4%) and education (14.8%).²⁸ Over 40% state that in sectors such as housing conditions, civil society has no impact. At the same time experts view civil society's capability to generate overall impact as insufficient. Analysis of the survey results shows that civil society's impact on social processes is considered limited by 40% of experts, whereas 51.4% see some potential for impact.

An important element of the internal perception of impact is the ability of CSOs to exert influence in the democratisation of society within the organisational survey. The percentage of affirmative answers, such as "moderate" and "significant," amounts to 54.8% here, whereas "insignificant" and "limited" account for 45.2% of answers. Asked if they could think of any civil society activity or campaign which has encouraged and promoted democracy, 74.2% of respondents answered "one, two" or "many," whereas 25.8% could not think of any such examples.

The organisational survey also asked a question about civil society's activities in advocating for the provision of public services. Of the respondents, 56.6% of organisations gave an example of their activities in this area, 21.2% could not think of any

²⁸ These areas are considered some of the most deeply-routed advocacy areas according to the CEE Trust Project *Has our dream come true? Comparative research of Central and Eastern European Civil Societies representative survey, conducted by Alpha Research in 2010.*

cases and 25.6% were hesitant to confirm that their organisations did engage in this type of advocacy. Those who answered positively provided the following examples of successful campaigns for provision of public services:

- Services and accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities;
- Campaigns for people with cancer, which led to establishing a patient organisation and better awareness of the problems in this area, thus initiating public debate on accessibility to proper treatment and medication;
- Protests of mothers, women’s associations and campaigns, which led to extending the period of maternity leave to 12 months;
- Services for children and other social services, as well as establishment of centres for victims of child trafficking;
- Enforcing the social assistant service as a service provision to people with disabilities;
- Improving access to and increasing funding for the IVF programme;
- Campaigns relating to the transparency of information concerning central heating and energy companies, which had limited success;
- The campaign for application of the Natura2000 network, which in an on-going concern of environmental CSOs, and has had an overall positive outcome in limiting overdevelopment.

CSOs also seem to acknowledge the impact informal civic activists can exert on social issues. The emergence of informal civic groups, and their advocacy abilities and impact, is an interesting phenomenon in the development of civil society in Bulgaria, and suggests a bigger role that these new faces will play in the arena of social activities in the future.

4.3 and 4.6. Policy impact (internal and external perception)

The policy impact score sheds light on the level of democracy, the level of transparency, and the effectiveness of government-civil society joint decision-making. Data from both the organisational and external perceptions surveys show a relatively limited CSO capability to impact policy-making. Of the

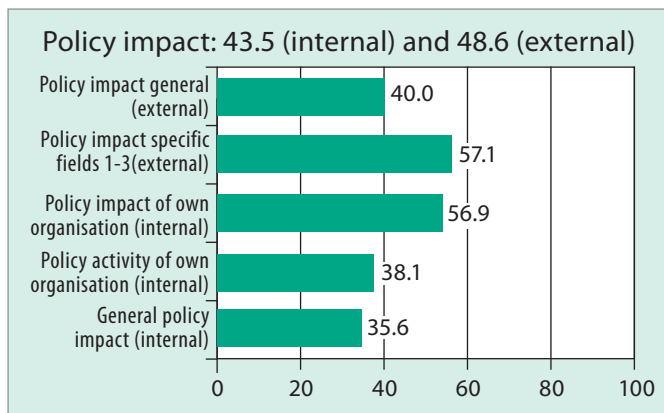


Figure III.4.4. Policy impact of CSOs

organisations themselves, 49.0% considers their impact to be limited and 15.4% reports their impact as non-existent, while only 1.3% sees their impact as significant. The perception of the respondents from outside civil society is similar: 57.1% consider civil society's policy impact to be limited while only 8.6% reported it high.²⁹ Further, according to a citizens' Omnibus representative survey conducted by the Open Society Institute – Sofia in October 2009, one-third of citizens see CSOs as partners in the policy implementation process, whereas the remaining two-thirds consider the organisations' role in this process insignificant, suggesting that CSOs are still not considered to implement fully their democratic functions of public monitoring, advocacy, and being a watchdog.

Regarding advocacy activities, 35.9% of organisations answered that they had advocated changes to or initiated policies in the last two years, versus 58.3% of organisations with no such initiatives. The organisations that answered positively identified several priority issues for advocacy in policy-making:

- education;
- provision of social services and an accessible environment;
- enhancing policy changes in the work with disadvantaged people;
- legislation (amendments, adoption of new pieces of legislation);
- campaigns against genetically modified organism (GMO) authorisation and for nature conservation;
- public campaign against legislation allowing Internet spying, which met with limited success.

The assessment given by CSOs of the success of advocacy actions taken on policy-making is encouraging. Most respondents consider advocacy for policy initiation to be successful. Regarding the end results of these initiatives, "the proposal was approved" and "the proposal is under discussion" account for the largest combined number of responses.

The data from the external perception survey also provide positive examples of civil society's activity in the field of policy-making. They show that the spheres in which CSOs were active include the environment, people with disabilities and the disadvantaged, health, nature conservation, and the social sphere.

Finally, the organisational survey asked questions about civil society's role in raising awareness and educating on various issues. According to 61.7% of respondents, civil society is somewhat active in this respect. Regarding monitoring of the government's work and holding the government accountable for policy implementation, a high percentage (38.0%) of respondents indicated a lack of activity on the part of civil society, although 52.7% of respondents considered that civil society is somewhat active in this respect.

²⁹ The indicator scores cover civil society's impact on policy in general and the impact of CSO advocacy on selected policy issues. The data are drawn from three separate questions in the Organisational survey and two questions from the External Perception Survey.

4.7. Impact of civil society on attitudes

This indicator measures civil society's impact on public trust, tolerance towards various social and ethnic groups, civic engagement, and confidence in civil society. On this indicator Bulgarian civil society scores 8.2 on a scale of 0-100.

Additional data gathered shed light on the level of trust in Bulgarian society as a whole. The data indicate that Bulgarians trust their closest family members, such as parents, siblings, children and grandchildren most (average of 9 on a 10 point scale). Next they trust friends (an average score of 7), and, next, colleagues and extended family (an average of 6), while relationships with

neighbours score at the middle of the scale (an average of 5). These trends confirm the finding of the earlier measurement of individual engagement, that individuals trust and communicate primarily with their closest circle, which is usually their family.

Social distances also illustrate the state of public tolerance to specific social groups and categories. More than half of adults surveyed are intolerant of drug addicts, alcoholics, criminals, homeless people, Roma, homosexuals and people living with HIV/AIDS.

An interesting finding is the relatively high percentage of respondents reporting intolerance to those using light drugs (83.9%) as compared to the percentage of respondents' intolerance for tax evasion (73.9%), using social benefits without being entitled to them (75.2%) and using public transport without paying (69.3%). The levels of public intolerance are also similar with regard to officials accepting bribes (81.3%), which is associated with common cases of corruption and misappropriation.

This indicator measures the extent to which these values are upheld by members of civil society, compared to the extent to which they are practiced in society at large. Based on the CSI quantitative data, civil society's impact on these attitudes is limited, which means that there is little difference in attitudes between people who are part of civil society and those who are not, and CSOs have limited ability to influence the practice of these values.

Regarding trust in civil society as a whole, the data show that levels of trust in various representatives of the organised part of civil society (charities, women's organisations and environmental organisations, trade unions, religious and political organisations) are relatively low. The aggregate value is 21.4 on the 100-point scale. In a

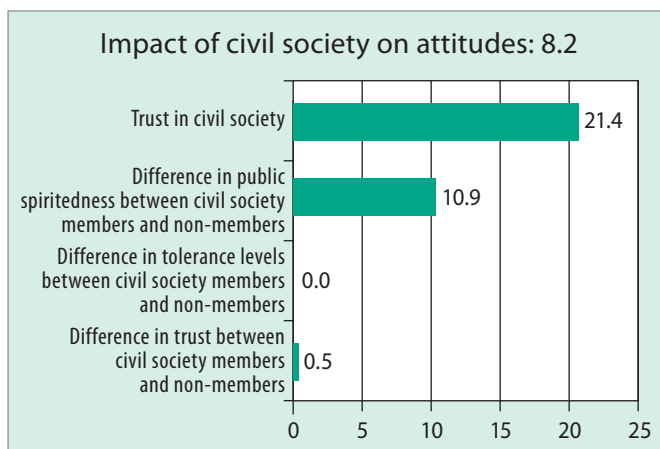


Figure III.4.5. Impact of civil society on attitudes

panel of questions added to the survey, 47.5% of respondents stated their trust in civil society. But when asked about their trust in NGOs in particular, only 22.1% of respondents affirmed their trust during the October 2009 OSI – Sofia Omnibus survey.

A panel of variables added to the population survey outlines the public’s position on the role of CSOs and the importance of their activities. This is a key element in the construction of civil society’s image in Bulgaria. The question “Could you please name up to three organisations that you trust out of the civil society organisations that you know” aimed to capture a snapshot of civil society’s image and identify those organisations citizens deem trustworthy. A large percentage of interviewees (39.3%) did not give an answer to this question. Others clearly stated they were not aware of any such organisations (11.8%). Overall, more than half of interviewees were hesitant, were not aware of or could not think of any CSOs. Further, one tenth said they didn’t trust any CSOs, though they did not indicate whether they knew of any organisations or were just responding negatively in principle. There were also respondents who stated that civil society did not exist in Bulgaria.³⁰

A major share of responses to this question on trust were also grossly generalised (“NGOs,” “trade unions,” “community centres,” “local communities,” “environmental organisations,” “charities,” “women’s organisations”).

The names of semi-civic, charity, and patriotic initiatives, in addition to government campaigns and projects, featured quite prominently among those of specific organisations named. Four specific policy areas, namely healthcare, social policy, environment and labour stood out. About a dozen organisations were mentioned by name more than five times.

Both the aggregate activity-based and name-based results allow us to conclude that public attitudes favour those civil society associations that are known to support and protect people in need

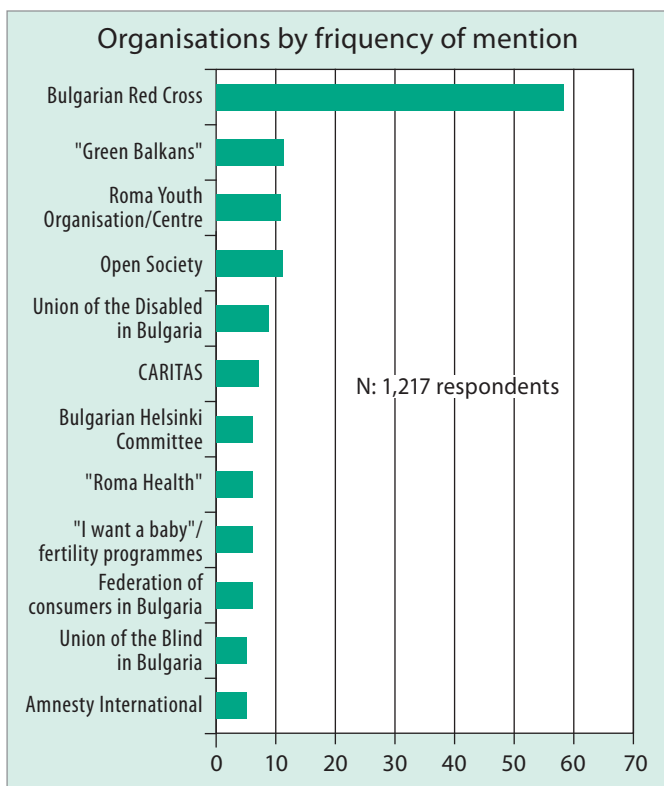


Figure III.4.6. List of organisations most frequently mentioned

³⁰ Data about trust analysed by Svetlana Avramova, sociologist, OSI-Sofia

and seen to organise trustworthy campaigns with nation-wide reverberations. The awareness is lower for NGOs that conduct surveys, provide training, implement projects, organise conferences, operate primarily in specialised circles and have continuous and targeted influence on government decisions and policies, but which, for one reason or another, fail to communicate their missions and expertise to the wider public.

Conclusion

The overall assessment is that civil society has the potential to impact on principal social issues, even though its overall impact is not sufficiently visible in terms of effect.

The existing legal framework in Bulgaria provides certain opportunities for citizens and their organisations to participate in the decision-making process. However, these provisions are not mandatory and there is no mechanism binding the administration to consult with civil society (BCNL 2009). Recently, the Council of Ministers adopted standards for public consultations, but they are still not legally binding, which prevents their enforcement in CSO-government relations. The CSI quantitative data and secondary sources allow us to conclude that the dialogue between civil society and the government is not continuous and is still subject to arbitrariness.

Despite the challenges facing the establishment and maintenance of partnerships with government institutions in policy making and implementation, advocacy, such as petitions and other forms of direct democracy, are becoming increasingly common. Regional discussions showed that the use of the internet for creating various forums and informal groups, signing petitions, providing comments and distributing information are developing as powerful tools for civic engagement.

In our research we found evidence of successful campaigns aimed at legislative amendments, efforts against restrictive measures imposed by the government or for defending the interests of certain vulnerable groups, and for informing and educating the public on certain issues. However, civil society's efforts still prove insufficient to effectively impact on many public spheres, policy making and policy implementation.

5. External Environment

This score for this dimension is based on international indices measuring the extent of socio-economic, cultural and political development, as well as data from the quantitative studies examining trust, the legal framework and civic engagement. These

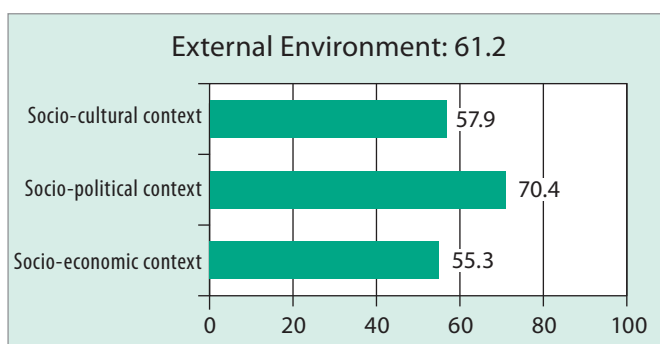


Figure III.5.1. External Environment scores

indicators help determine to what extent the Bulgarian environment hinders or facilitates civil society development. The main characteristics of the context in Bulgaria include:

- Economic and social challenges;
- The unfinished business of the EU enlargement in the areas of health, social policy, the economy, education and political governance;³¹
- Moderate levels of government effectiveness;
- Ongoing problems with judicial reform, combating organised crime, discrimination and low support for vulnerable groups;
- Low levels of trust and public tolerance, which hinder the establishment of social links and obstruct the building of social capital;
- Corruption.

The aggregate levels for this dimension show the highest values of the CSI for Bulgaria with a score of 61.2 out of 100. This indicates that environmental conditions are relatively favourable for the development of civil society. However, specific areas have more influence on the potential of civil society, namely the perception of corruption and its connection with other issues such as the rule of law, unreformed administration and a lack of capacity for public policy reforms (Karamfilova, 2010). In addition, EU leverage was limited in terms of reforming the human development domain (healthcare, educational and social systems policy reforms), which resulted in incomplete reforms in these sectors, which is directly linked to the quality of life of the population (Kavrakova, 2008).

Furthermore, there are still gaps in national-level legislation on the financing of CSOs by the government and a lack of uniform codification of the various opportunities for civic participation in discussions, and decision- and policy-making.³²

5.1. Socio-economic context

A snapshot of the socio-economic context is formed using data from several indices that measure the opportunities for development of human capital, the potential for economic development, social equality and the perception of corruption. The aggregate data for this dimension based on the indices is presented in Table III.5.1 below. This indicator scores 55.3 out of 100 in the matrix, indicating average levels of socio-economic development. A more detailed analysis of individual data outlines the challenges facing the functioning of civil society, namely the serious social problems and limited potential for economic development, as well as the perception of high levels of corruption.

³¹ "The Unfinished Business of the Fifth Enlargement Countries," Comparative Report by Assya Kavrakova, available at www.eupi.eu, 2008. The study examines the experience of the former communist countries from CEE, which revealed some limitations of the EU impact on the candidate countries policy reforms in the human development domain.

³² http://www.bcnl.org/docs/NGO_participation_eng_logos_03_486.pdf

Data from the Basic Capabilities Index³⁴ for Bulgaria show levels of 98.5 out of 100 for 2008.³⁵ For comparison, the Index value is 99 and 97 for 2007 and 2009 respectively.³⁶

Table III.5.1. Socio-economic context

BCI 2008	Transparency International 2008	GINI coefficient 2007-2008, World Bank	Development Indicators World Bank 2007
98.5	36 ³³	70.8	15.7

According to the BCI, capabilities for human development in Bulgaria earn an intermediate score. The UN Human Development Index³⁷ also ranks Bulgaria among the countries with an intermediate level of development.

The World Bank Development Indicators³⁸ for Bulgaria are represented by a value of 15.7, which constitutes the ratio between the country’s external debt and its gross national product. This indicator gives an idea of a country’s degree of economic independence and an estimate of its ability to make future payments on its debt. This indicates an overall macroeconomic stability of Bulgaria, which also enjoys lower rates of public deficit.

The GINI coefficient of inequality of income distribution in society and stratification of society has a value of 70.8 out of 100. For the purposes of the CSI, the GINI Coefficient is inverted, such that a higher value indicates greater equality, to be consistent with other CSI scores. This indicates relatively low levels of stratification in society as a whole, but still suggests significant differences between the poorest and richest in society.

Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU³⁹ and the effects of the global financial crisis can be expected to last longer there. According to the 2010 survey conducted by the OSI – Sofia Open Data sociological unit, *The Bulgarian Households and the Economic Crisis*, two-thirds of Bulgarians live with economic uncertainty. Asked, “How would you describe the situation in the country right now?” over 60 percent of respondents answered “unbearable, intolerable.” At the same time, the number of people who defined the situation as “normal, good” has decreased by more than half

³³ The original score of 3.6 on a scale of 1 to 10 is multiplied by 10 to be consistent with a scale of 0 to 100 used for the CSI methodology.

³⁴ The Basic Capabilities Index measures poverty and capabilities for ensuring the individual and collective rights of every member of society. BCI is based on three indicators: percentage of children who have completed fifth grade, mortality rate among children under five years of age, percentage of infants born in a hospital or under medical supervision.

³⁵ <http://bgrf.org/bg/?media&article=12>

³⁶ http://www.socialwatch.org/sites/default/files/ICB_2009_eng/BCI-2009-alphabetical-eng.pdf

³⁷ http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_BGR.html

³⁸ These indicators measure life expectancy, level of education, literacy rate, infrastructure, economic policy, external debt, GDP, health, energy, environment.

³⁹ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsieb010> by GDP per capita in purchasing power standards, Bulgaria scores the last within the EU.

between February 2009 and March 2010 (from 9.6% to 4%). A series of studies conducted by the Open Society Institute – Sofia, part of which were carried out jointly with the World Bank, show that in times of crisis the gap between the most vulnerable groups and the others widens even more.⁴⁰ The percentage of people falling into the ‘vulnerable’ category has been increasing and includes a growing number of children. Poverty is significantly more prevalent among households with children (over 27%) than among households without children (20%). Vulnerability to poverty among families with two or more children is particularly pronounced; three out of four families with three or more children are poor.

People who live with less than €45 per month are extremely poor.⁴¹ These are primarily people living in rural areas (83% of Bulgaria’s territory is defined as rural). In addition, 60% of all people classified as poor in Bulgaria are Roma. The other vulnerable groups affected are pensioners, the unemployed, large households, people with disabilities, and women. In Bulgaria, 26% of people under the age of 17 also live below the poverty line. For comparison’s sake, in the 20% of people under 17 live in poverty. In Bulgaria 34% of pensioners are poor, as compared to 19% for the EU.

Regarding levels of corruption, the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index has a value of 3.6 and 3.8 for 2008 and 2009, respectively. The country shows a significant decline in overall ranking, occupying 72nd place.⁴² In the 2009 survey, corruption in the judiciary was identified as the leading problem

Table III.5.2 Transparency

International Corruption Index

Year	Index for Bulgaria
1998	2.9
1999	3.3
2000	3.5
2001	3.7
2002	4.0
2003	3.9
2004	4.1
2005	4.0
2006	4.0
2007	4.1
2008	3.6
2009	3.8

with a value of 4.5. Political parties came in second (4.3), followed by parliament (4.3) and the public administration (4.1). In 2010 in Bulgaria public interest was focused primarily on economic development, employment and health (OSI-Sofia Omnibus 2010). However, the issue of corruption remains one of the main problems of concern to the public and affects civil society development as well. As the case study on environment (Appendix 3) shows, mismanagement practices in relation to the allocation of public resources, especially under the EU Operational programmes, raise doubts about the legitimacy of various CSOs.

⁴⁰ http://politiki.bg/?cy=183&lang=1&a0i=223581&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=701

⁴¹ Eurostat’s definition of poverty risk refers to individuals living in households where the equivalent income is below the threshold of 60% of the national equivalent median income. http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/surveyreports/EU0703019D/EU0703019D_3.htm

⁴² Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2008.

5.2. Socio-political context

The socio-political context analyses to what extent the Bulgarian political system, the assurance of fundamental rights and freedoms and associational rights, and the system of registration of CSOs contribute to the establishment and development of civil society. This dimension has a value of 70.4, indicating a favourable socio-political environment. The data are constructed based on the Freedom House Index, World Bank indicators for government efficiency and additional data from quantitative studies conducted under the project.

After the fall of communism in 1989, Bulgaria enacted reforms and political changes aimed at making the country democratic and politically free through a strong civil society, separation of powers, an independent media, respect for

Table III.5.3 Socio-political context

Freedom House 2008	Freedom House 2008	Freedom House 2008	World Bank 2007 – World Governance Indicators
<i>Political rights and freedoms</i>	<i>Rule of law</i>	<i>Associational rights</i>	<i>Government efficiency</i>
90	79.17	91.67	52

human rights, and protection of minorities. The new constitution adopted in 1991 was one of the first steps in this direction. However, 20 years after the beginning of the transition, various issues remain on the agenda in the political environment. Freedom House data show high levels of political rights and freedoms and associational rights. On the other hand, however, Bulgaria is still being monitored by the European Commission within the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification. The fight against corruption and organised crime, the struggle for judicial reform that covers issues of functionality, effectiveness and impartiality of the judiciary; and the absorption of EU structural funds remain the major issues within this safeguard monitoring by the EU, which is consistent with weaknesses in the country's institutional and administrative capacity.⁴³

With respect to human and minority rights in Bulgaria,⁴⁴ the main ethnic minority, the Roma, are still largely discriminated against. The Freedom house report also expresses serious concerns about the rights of homosexuals, immigrants and refugees from countries outside the EU, children and older people in nursing homes.

As noted by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee,⁴⁵ among the main human rights issues for 2009 are the continuing lack of reform and restructuring of children's institutions and nursing homes; detention, including poor conditions in places of detention; deterioration of the legal guarantees against unlawful use of special investigative techniques; cooperation with the International Court of Human Rights; the lack of discussion on the Gender Equality Act; violations against vulnerable groups; and cases of arbitrary restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly.

⁴³ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/index_bg.htm

⁴⁴ <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=7790&year=2010>

⁴⁵ <http://humanrightsbulgaria.files.wordpress.co/2010/03/press.pdfm>

Data from the CSI organisational survey show that CSOs assess the state of legislation for civil society as “relatively favourable.” Registration procedures for CSOs have been assessed as “satisfactory,” but organisations reported there were restrictions on advocacy, such as conflicts of interests and corruption practices. In the opinion of 44.2% of respondents, the legal framework for the development of civil society is relatively favourable for organisations’ activities. However, for 28.2% of respondents, the current legal framework is too restrictive and for 6.4% it is extremely restrictive.

5.3. Socio-cultural context

The socio-cultural context score is determined by the principal indicators of social capital, such as trust, tolerance towards others and the attitudes towards social phenomena.

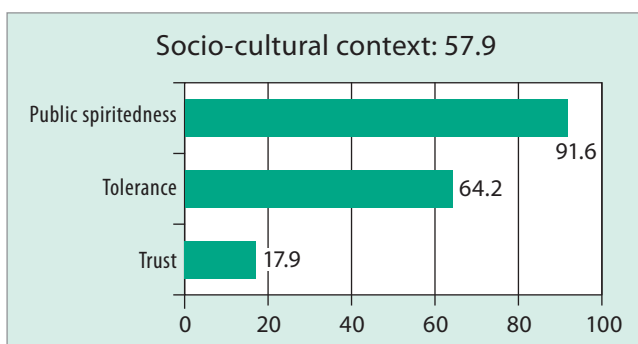


Figure III.5.2. Socio-cultural context

The aggregate data for the indicator show a value of 57.9 out of 100, which indicates relatively favourable conditions. However, low levels of trust and tolerance towards others, which hamper the development of sustainable social linkages, are an obstacle for the development of civil society. Data from the population survey show that two-thirds of respondents did not trust other people. Regarding public institutions, the most notable finding is distrust of political parties and parliament. The EU, the UN and NATO enjoy the highest levels of public trust.

With regard to social tolerance, social rather than ethnic issues prove the greater challenge, which means that citizens base their intolerance on social acceptance rather than ethnic background. The reasons for “rejection” of certain social categories⁴⁶ bring out what is common between them: “threat,” “otherness,” “different,” “incomprehensible.” The previously mentioned levels of intolerance of anti-social behaviour on the other hand would seem to offer a good prerequisite for motivating people to act. The question remains whether such attitudes lead to sustainable actions.

Conclusion

Overall, the environment can be defined as relatively favourable for the development of civil society. However, there are still problematic areas, such as corruption, poverty and unreformed domains of human development such as healthcare, education and social policy, coupled with problems in the judiciary and public ad-

⁴⁶ Drug addicts, alcoholics, hooligans, homeless people, Roma, homosexuals and people living with HIV/AIDS.

ministration that prevent the development of a sustainable environment and the formation of a mature civil society.

EU accession was expected to provide all answers to needs of reform. It was taken for granted that preparations for EU membership promoted the democratisation of the candidate countries. The tools of conditionality combined with the perspective of being a new member were believed to have played major role in democratisation processes. What occurred, however, is that most of the accession criteria followed the EU-driven agenda rather than the needs of domestic transformation and reform.

Thus, areas where the EU did not exercise any leverage remained unreformed. This has major implications, primarily in administrative capacity and institutional efficiency, which affect the ability to conduct any further reforms. This shapes the background of an EU member state that cannot fully benefit from the opportunities, but can suffer from the catch-up effects of necessary domestic transformation.

IV. CIVIL SOCIETY AND EU MEMBERSHIP

In addition to the original questionnaires, a set of variables was added to the quantitative surveys dealing with the EU's role for the development of civil society in Bulgaria. Despite the undeniable positive economic and political effects of membership, various issues surround Bulgaria's integration. EU structural funds are a public resource earmarked for development and are the main financial tools of EU cohesion policy. They have considerable impact on national public policy. For this impact to be positive, however, a change in the way resources are allocated is needed in order to ensure transparency and eliminate any management capacity issues. Due to the specifics of the scheme for decentralisation of structural funds management and incomplete administrative reform, following Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the main funding channels for CSOs are through the structures of public administration on the national level.⁴⁷ The procedures for application and selection of beneficiaries under the Operational Programmes are open to serious criticism due to their centralisation within the administration, strong bureaucracy and ineffectiveness. This, coupled with the exclusion of CSOs from planning and programming, as well as issues with advance payments and co-financing, raises serious questions as to which organisations, if any, can benefit from this type of structural support.

Within the organisational survey, the national team asked: "How are CSOs funded under various EU programmes and what are the most common problems that appear?" The respondents reported the difficulties they had encountered while applying for and implementing projects under Operational Programmes. When asked if they knew about any irregularities in programme management and implementation, 40% of interviewees gave an affirmative answer. The following summary of open-ended responses shows that these concern mostly unlawful actions, incompetence, intentional or deliberate malpractice or inadvertent omissions and infringements.

⁴⁷ EU funds are managed at a national level in member states through Operational Programmes that provide the overall guidelines and a provisional indicative programme of funds allocation. The scheme of management is designed by the national government. It comprises Managing Authorities that are settled in the public administration bodies in separate ministries and are responsible for the allocation, management and overall control of the projects under the Operational Programmes.

Table IV.1: Reported irregularities in EU funds management

Group Summary⁴⁸	Number of answers	Answers quoted
Unlawful selection of contractors/ beneficiaries	16	"Selectivity of funding"; "misuse of administrative power"; "lack of transparency of procedures"; "cases of organisations being newly-established in order to get funding"; "no information on the beneficiaries of OPAC resources whereas funds are provided for building their capacity"; "malpractices of lobbying"; "preliminary arrangements for project funding"; "rent-seeking practices in ensuring funding"; "nepotism."
Corrupt practices	14	"Corruption practices and irregularities enjoying high level of tolerance"; examples with the Agriculture Fund and the SAPARD Programme were offered.
Malpractice, conflicts of interest	11	Misappropriation and violations of procedures and conflicts of interest.
Lack of administrative capacity, deficiencies in procedures	9	Lack of capacity in ministries and agencies administering the programmes; procedural irregularities in implementation.
Bureaucracy and ineffective programme management procedures	6	Ineffective monitoring and inconsistent guidelines on the part of the Managing Authority, leading to no sustainable results, but only absorbing enormous resources.
Irregularities in communication	6	Lack of clear and timely feedback and provision of information on the technical and financial reports on the part of the Managing Authority; communication gaps.
Failure to meet deadlines	4	Failure to meet deadlines and delays in payments, problems in meeting contractual obligations.
No specific answer	5	"Let us not go into detail"; "We all know about this"; the "State Agency for National Security are being paid to do this"; "These practices were publicised by EC and OLAF."

⁴⁸ This analysis was prepared by Svetlana Avramova, sociologist with the Open Society Institute – Sofia.

Approximately 40% of civil society respondents in the organisational survey identified dependency on government structures as the most serious cause of irregularities, including NGOs participation in corruption. Misappropriations were also cited as a problem for corruption by 39.3% of respondents while 37.6% cited unlawful absorption of resources and 23.9% cited deficiencies in procedures pursuant to the Public Procurement Act. These responses underscore the problems in the environment in which civil society organisations operate, as well as the main deficits in the implementation of EU-funded projects. The reasons for irregularities stem primarily from the funding opportunities and the ways public resources are allocated to CSOs. The issue of effectiveness and irregularities in resource allocation and management under the Operational Programmes where CSOs are beneficiaries is discussed by CSOs with particular vigour. According to a CSD report,⁴⁹ in Bulgaria, after its accession to the EU, one of the main issues was: “Concentrating European funds and programmes into the hands of the administration,” which resulted in risks of corruption. Further, the report stated that these reforms led to “suppressing critical (and constructive) anticorruption initiatives, which have been replaced by PR and media campaigns and the formation of NGO ‘loops’ set up by high-level civil servants and politicians for the sole purpose of misappropriating EU funds.”

The representatives of large NGOs and municipal and district administrations from the South Central Planning Region interviewed in a survey carried out by the Foundation for Local Government Reform pointed out that numerous NGOs newly registered in the last two years are actually organisations of large companies or political party structures attempting to gain easier access to the Structural Funds. Very often these organisations rely on personal contacts with local government officials in order to succeed in being included in partnership initiatives. Researcher Vyara Gancheva also finds strong affiliations between NGOs and certain political parties (European perspectives of civic participation, 2008).

These issues are multiplied across various EU programmes and determine the low levels of absorption of the allocated funds⁵⁰ and failure to effectively utilise resources.⁵¹ The monopolisation of the process by the structures of the executive power in Bulgaria served as a barrier to key CSO players in society participating in both programming (priority setting) and implementation, and assured ambiguous results. The created management scheme in the pre-accession process gave the appearance of supporting civil society development while in reality providing revenues for cer-

⁴⁹ Crime Without Punishment, CSD.

⁵⁰ According to European Commission data, as of December 2009 Bulgaria’s level of absorption is below 3%. Absorption capacity is a term used by the European Commission to define the capacity of a member state to successfully and efficiently utilise EU funds.

⁵¹ <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=news&lng=bg&SType=show&id=1964>

tain political circles.⁵² Unfortunately this model was replicated with the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in Bulgaria after accession (Hristova, D. 2010).

The lack of clear procedures about and transparency of the Managing Authorities' activities makes the Operational Programmes vulnerable to suspicions about irregularities. The suspicions and isolated cases of unlawful practices serve to confirm a public image of the foundation/NGO as an entity for receiving funds without any actual results. Thinking of NGOs like this strengthens the conviction that they exist as an end in themselves, which can only contribute to relatively low levels of trust and the lack of understanding of the purpose and activities of CSOs. In a representative survey conducted by the Open Society Institute – Sofia in October 2009 (Figure IV.1), 56.6% of citizens surveyed pointed to corruption practices as the main mode of action of CSOs.

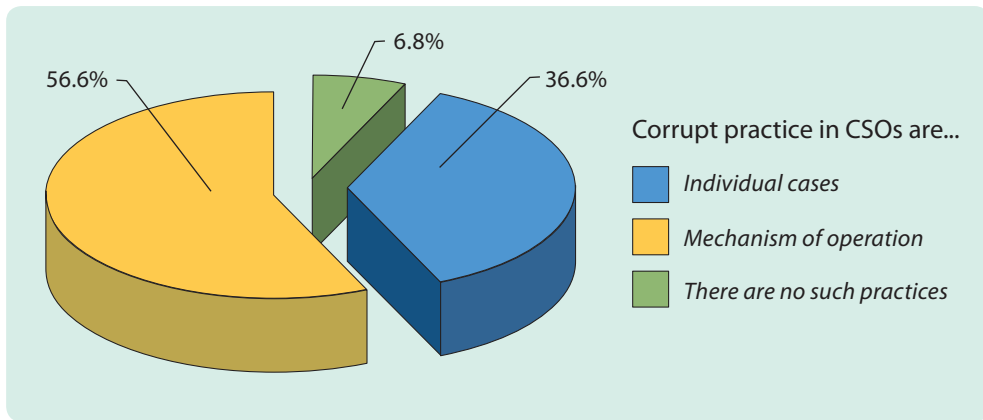


Figure IV.1. Corrupt practices in CSOs

Negative attitudes towards the work and role of CSOs, coupled with the capture and abuse of the sector by various non-citizen groups and suspected unlawful spending of EU funds, magnified through the publication of European Commission reports, create an unfavourable environment for the development of civil society in Bulgaria. Instead of the expected positive changes, EU financing has therefore led to negative

⁵² "There has been abuse of NGO status, using the legitimate façade for less than transparent operations. In Bulgaria, there are quite close connections between high-ranking public servants, politicians or the partners of politicians, and the NGO sector. While it is possible to see advantages for the sector and for individual organisations stemming from the involvement of well connected people, there is also a risk that such practices impinge on the integrity of the sector and create an atmosphere which questions the transparency of the decision-making process, thereby implying that decisions are pre-determined or that funding is only available to those with strong political connections; this seems to be clearly the case in Bulgaria. The situation is reported to be particularly serious in Bulgaria where the practice of multiple registrations of NGOs by the same person or group of people using the same address has been commonplace. EU funding to the sector has thus had the negative consequence of attracting people who have no intention of actually functioning as an NGO, but who regard the funding as a lucrative source of revenue," Ex post evaluation of the contribution of the 2000-2002 Access and civil society development programmes.

shifts in the sector. To reform the civil society sector in Bulgaria will require changing the environment, the ways CSOs operate, the methods for distributing EU funds and the mechanisms for allocation of resources and capacity building among all actors. Further efforts are necessary in order to overcome the identified challenges:

- Counter negative images of CSOs by directing efforts towards the recognition of CSOs for their positive impact, through awareness campaigns and greater civic engagement, emphasising the monitoring and watchdog functions of civil society.
- Identify and apply practices to ensure the accountability and the transparency of Operational Programmes with the involvement of CSOs.
- Promote effective and working practices of co-operation between CSOs.
- Facilitate relations between government and civil society by introducing a system of checks and balances to guard against mismanagement and improper use of public resources.

V. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN BULGARIA

The analysis of the CSI data allows us to determine the strengths of civil society in Bulgaria and the weaknesses in its development. This analysis then triggers a discussion on the state of civil society and provides guidance and recommendations for targeted action.

1. Strengths of civil society in Bulgaria

- Relatively well developed organisational structure and trained staff;
- Capacity and expertise for project management and provision of services;
- Good level of expert knowledge of the employees in CSOs and capability to provide quality information and consultancy;
 - Potential to impact on public policies and organise advocacy campaigns, particularly on social issues;
 - Growing realisation of the importance and need for coalitions and networking specifically for thematic/sectoral coalitions;
 - Relatively good legal framework;
 - Improved relationships with the business sector and development of more corporate social responsibility;
 - Good understanding and awareness of the need for shared values, such as transparency, democratic governance, volunteering, charity and tolerance;
 - Green and conservation causes are proving to be a successful model for civic engagement;
 - Awareness of the need for sustainable dialogue and partnership with government institutions through the initiation of various projects and programmes looking for support from the national institutions;
 - Trends towards self-organisation to impact on various sectors of public policy.

2. Weaknesses of civil society in Bulgaria

- Financial instability and instability of human resources in the sector, including low labour standards;
- Sustained low levels of social and political participation by citizens;

- Low levels of trust in the institutions of representative democracy and a lack of stable social linkages to lay the foundations of community and civil society;
 - Perception of corruption of civil society in the public domain, which prevents the development of civil society by challenging the goals, mission and activities of civil society;
 - CSOs are not widely recognised as the legitimate mediator of public interests;
 - Limited capabilities to have an impact on policy making, and a need to establish more sustainable relationships between the government and civil society;
 - Inability of civil society to make progressive values into operational norms;
 - Lack of a common regulatory framework and systematic mechanism for the processes of consultation, partnership and work between civil society and the government
 - Lack of sustainable contacts and networking between various CSOs in different sectors, which limits the impact of advocacy efforts;
 - Issues with the representativeness, legitimacy and internal democracy of civil society;
 - Lack of international contacts and activities at the European level, leading to a marginal impact on the decision-making process in the EU and the isolation of Bulgarian CSOs.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data analysis and identified strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Bulgaria, the project team makes the following recommendations:

1. Reconnect CSOs with the citizens:

- Introduce various forms of joint activities, such as public civil panels and interactive tools to involve and engage citizens in setting and implementing the agenda of the organised part of civil society.
- Increase the visibility of CSOs by publicising the influence of their activities on people's lives, rather than focusing on projects; introduce interactive forms of communication between CSOs and education bodies (schools and universities), including civic education projects, seminars and volunteer weeks.
- Develop a strategy for creating sustainable relationships with the media and drafting a pact for cooperation.
- Provide recognition for CSOs willing to comply with higher standards of transparency and accountability.

2. Promote and strengthen internal consolidation in the sector:

- Enhance networks and coalitions as a tool to effectively promote and advocate for certain causes through consolidation and sectoral and intrasectoral communication.
- Based on the example of environmental organisations, establish a common mechanism to select and nominate CSO representatives to participate in various government-run consultation bodies, such as commissions and committees.
- Draft an agenda for emergency reforms in the human development domain (such as healthcare, social policy, education, rule of law and fighting corruption) among CSOs in order to improve the environment and to strengthen the impact of civil society on decision-making processes at the national, regional and European levels.

3. Create support mechanisms for overcoming the isolation of Bulgarian CSOs:

- Create a resource centre for CSOs and citizens.
- Strengthen CSO involvement in European-level networks by creating a focal point on enhancing capacity, providing proper information and facilitating contacts.
 - Emphasise the creation of international partnerships on a project-based and ad hoc basis by developing a database on potential partner organisations by theme and sector.
 - Streamline the application process for project funding at the European level through training and capacity building.
 - Utilise the new forms of civic engagement provided by the Lisbon Treaty⁵³ and streamline CSO involvement on major EU legislation by supporting an early warning system.

4. Improve interaction between policy makers, CSOs and citizens by creating a sustainable and predictable legislative environment for interactions.

5. Advocate reforms in the funding of CSO activities by the state and the EU funds:

- Develop appropriate mechanisms to support CSOs at the national level through model and know-how for project generation.
 - Decrease the bureaucratic burden and facilitate the access of civil society to funds including structural and cohesion funds, by developing an advocacy platform for strengthening effective civic participation in the next programming period of EU funds and ensuring better rules and management schemes.

⁵³ The European Citizens Initiative allows EU citizens to propose EU laws under certain conditions: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/citizens_initiative/index_en.htm

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The second phase of CSI in Bulgaria aims to provide a comprehensive review of the state of civil society several years after accession to the EU. This contextual background has significantly changed the landscape in the country and it calls for a new role for CSOs. The CSI report identifies the main strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations to address the challenges and to outline an agenda for action for all the relevant stakeholders.

The CSI for Bulgaria reaffirmed that civil society has a problematic area in civic engagement, while demonstrating moderate levels of the practice of values and (still limited) ability to create an impact, with higher levels of CSO organisation and external environment conditions.

The low score for civic engagement is mainly due to the low levels of participation in the organisational structures of civil society and low levels of interpersonal trust, which affects the functioning of civil society as a whole. CSOs are seen to act primarily *for* rather than *with* citizens and do not operate under citizens' mandate. Thus citizens prefer new forms of participation and representation of their personal interests. Various civic activist groups inhabit the arena of civil society in Bulgaria and are visible, active and able to create an impact. This requires a specific commitment on behalf of CSOs to channel this civic energy and enhance commitment through higher visibility, credibility of actions and forms of mutual interaction between CSOs and citizens in the form of civil panels, volunteers' weeks and civic education projects. This will also serve as a turning point in enhancing CSOs' level of impact. Through reconnecting with citizens and gaining higher legitimacy and a clear-cut mandate from the citizens, CSOs will be better able to influence decision- and policy-making and to target their activities with a supply-demand approach, empowered by the respective constituencies and in response to citizens needs.

Moderate levels of impact are also due to the unsustainable sectoral communication and infrastructure. More than 20 years after the resurgence of CSOs in Bulgaria, they are still not fully able to consolidate efforts and network sufficiently. There are no comprehensive umbrella organisations in Bulgaria and CSOs are still not fully able to coordinate. This requires further efforts to enhance CSO consolidation to improve their societal responsiveness. Furthermore the internal organisation of CSOs calls for review of the financial viability of the sector through diversification of funding sources, enhancing fundraising accountability and better management of public funding. Within the structure dimension, the policies on employment within

CSOs also prove a challenge. Personnel instability, lack of job security and hiring on a temporary, project basis characterise the sector.

In the sphere of values, CSOs need to adopt further measures in enhancing labour and environmental standards, developing codes of conduct and transparency standards, and ensuring that these are enforced in practice. In addition they need to streamline their abilities to overcome a negative public image and rectify corruption in the civic sector. CSOs themselves need to advocate for better transparency and accountability of the sector in order to sustain their role of a public monitor and watchdog, thus enhancing their legitimacy and impact.

In relation to impact, CSO-government relations are still subject to arbitrariness. Though some legislation is in place and standards for consultations are adopted, further measures to frame these relations are necessary in order to secure clear-cut uniform legally-binding rules in communication with the government and its consultative bodies.

The external environmental background provides a comparatively favourable framework, but issues of corruption, poverty and unreformed areas of human development hinder civil society development. With EU accession, these challenges appear even more acutely on the agenda as there is no active leverage to push for reforms. This is where CSOs can contribute by setting the agenda on a national level to advocate for an action plan for reforms and to prove themselves legitimate actors in society.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Data collection and sampling

We utilised three quantitative surveys to thoroughly capture the state of affairs of civil society in Bulgaria. The Population Survey, the External Perception Survey and the Organisational Survey capture the situation from three different perspectives and represent a cross-cutting analysis. The surveys (from data collection to the primary statistical frequencies) were carried out from 20 February to 15 April 2009.

Population Survey

The population sample is two-tier stratified random sample performed by OSI-Sofia Sociological Unit Open Data. The sample encompasses 1,217 respondents, evenly distributed in terms of gender representation, age groups, and geographical coverage as represented in the tables below.

Table A1.1. Respondents in the Population Survey

Gender of respondent	Frequency	Percent
Male	604	49.6
Female	612	50.3
Total	1,216	99.9
Missing	1	0.1
Total	1,217	100.0
Age of respondents	Frequency	Percent
18-24	88	7.2
25-34	200	16.4
35-44	226	18.6
45-54	262	21.5
55-64	246	20.2
65+	192	15.8
Total	1,214	99.8
Missing/No answer	3	0.2
Total	1,217	100.0

Organisational Survey

The organisational survey, based on organisations listed in the official registry in Bulgaria, was comprised of NGOs registered for public and private benefit, community centres, religious organisations and trade unions. The total number of registered organisations by January 2009 was 34,236.⁵⁴ Our research team chose 200 random respondent organisations for face-to-face interviews. Out of these 200 organisations, we were unable to locate 40% as we did not have accurate addresses and were not able to determine whether they were operating. Most of the interviewees outside the capital were not able to locate the identified organisations. In addition, approximately 2-3% of the selected organisations refused to participate. We then selected an additional 100 organisations from an Open Society Institute-Sophia database of previous research conducted on strengthening the capacity of the NGO sector. We approached these organisations via email and received 46 completed questionnaires. The total number of valid questionnaires we received was 156.

Table A1.2. Profile of the Organisational Survey

	Frequency	Valid %
Farmer/fisherman group or cooperative	5	3.2
Traders or business association	3	1.9
Professional association (e.g. doctors, teachers)	10	6.5
Religious or spiritual group	5	3.2
Cultural group or association (e.g. arts, music, theatre, film)	10	6.5
Education group (e.g. parent-teacher association, school committee)	17	11.0
Health group / social service association (e.g. association for people with disabilities)	12	7.8
Sports association	25	16.2
Youth group	4	2.6
Women's group	2	1.3
NGO / civic group / human rights organisation (e.g. Rotary Club, Red Cross, Amnesty International)	4	2.6
Ethnic-based community group	1	0.6
Environmental or conservational organisation	7	4.5
Organisations for regional and local development	11	7.1
Community centre (Chitalishta network)	17	11.0
Public policy institutes	3	1.9
Lobbying and advocacy organisation	4	2.6
Others	14	9.1
Total	154	100.0
Missing	2	
Total	156	

⁵⁴ Bulgarian Bulstat official statistical registry <http://bulstat.registryagency.bg/Data.html>

External Perception Survey

The research team chose a different sampling approach for the external perception survey. Based on the various profiles specified in the questionnaire, the team divided the profile of potential respondents into groups to help choose the sample. Following this initial mapping exercise, a list of potential respondents was created from all the respective fields: business, media, local authorities, academia, the judiciary, the government, legislative institutions, and some representation of the EU. Official letters were distributed to 90 potential respondents. Thirty-five respondents took part in the survey.

Table A1.3. Profile of the External Perception Survey

	Frequency	Percent
Executive	3	8.6
Legislative	2	5.7
Judiciary	1	2.9
Private companies	3	8.6
Media	4	11.4
Academia	4	11.4
Representative of the EU	1	2.9
Local authorities	12	34.3
Others	4	11.4
Total	34	97.1
Missing	1	2.9

Appendix 2. Advisory Committee Members

- **Mr. Grisha Kamburov**, Executive Director of ABBRO (Association of Bulgarian Broadcasters)
- **Mr. Zdravko Sechkov**, Foundation for Local Government Reform
- **Assoc. Prof. Lucia Ilieva**, Limasol Consult Ltd
- **Mr. Luben Panov**, Programme Director of Bulgarian Center for Non-Profit Law
- **Ms. Madlen Vladimirova**, Consultant, EU issues
- **Ms. Mariana Milosheva**, Consultant, Creda Consulting
- **Ms. Maria Zlatareva**, UNDP
- **Ms. Maya Nyagolova**, UNDP
- **Ms. Milena Bokova**, Independent Adviser, environmental issues
- **Ms. Miriana Malamin-Sirijski**, Consultant, social services
- **Mr. Petko Georgiev**, ProMedia Group
- **Assoc. Prof. Petya Kabakchieva**, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
- **Ms. Slaveya Hristova**, Executive Director, Balkan Assist Association
- **Ms. Sonya Enilova**, Bourgas Regional Tourist Agency
- **Mr. Tomislav Donchev**, Mayor of Gabrovo Municipality (from March 2010 Minister for Management of the EU funds)

Appendix 3. Case studies

1. Trends of Civic Engagement in Bulgaria

Authors: Diana Andreeva, *MA*

Desislava Hristova Kurzydłowski, *PhD Candidate*

This case study examines the evidence for reshaping the concept of civil society and civic participation. It is argued that the traditional form of an NGO as a bearer of the concept is supplanted by the new faces of civil society: pensioners, students and environmentalists. According to the OSI-Sofia data, civil society is broadly associated with the activities of different community, interest, or age groups.

This case study claims that regardless of the low level of trust and participation, there is potential and civic energy to mainstream. The trend of low civic engagement has its counterbalance in the new form of civic activism expressed through informal movements. These movements manage to mobilise resources and energy and to exert real impact on societal dynamics.

2. Level of Organisation: Fundraising through Texts?

Author: Desislava Hristova Kurzydłowski, *PhD Candidate*

This case study reveals that text fundraising in Bulgaria is a developing trend in recent years. The data also states that individual citizens prefer sending texts in comparison to other forms of participation in fund-raising and charity.

However, in order to streamline this opportunity, further efforts are necessary to introduce a framework to mainstream the resources appropriately and make text campaigns a successful tool for fundraising. The qualitative data argues that in most cases in Bulgaria such initiatives channel the donors' interests to compensate for the shortcomings of public healthcare and social policies.

The study argues that a positive direction would be enhancing the Donors Message Service (DMS) as a platform for fundraising through texts, which also provides a mechanism for accountability. This combined with abolishing VAT (value added tax) on text donations can foster the potential of such campaigns.

3. Values of CSOs: Expertise Versus Representation

Authors: Christian Hristov

Elena Lilova

Desislava Hristova Kurzydłowski, *PhD Candidate*

The case study on the perception of values addresses a dichotomy in civil society in Bulgaria: representation versus expertise. NGOs in Bulgaria are a by-product of the administrative and institutional assistance of foreign donors which contributed to the high-expert profile of the organisations. As a result most of the well-positioned NGOs

work primarily *for*, rather than *with* citizens, lacking clear-cut representation and a bottom-up mandate. On the other hand, local grassroots initiatives lack such a level of organisations and expertise, but are empowered by the voice of the people.

This results in low public trust and a problematic image for CSOs in Bulgaria. The data reveals that organisations still struggle with issues of legitimacy and representation. There is a general mismatch between citizens' vision of what CSOs should stand for and what CSOs view as their priority. The representation gap allows informal movements to employ higher citizen trust and legitimacy, but without the expert skills and resources to sustain a long-term campaign.

4. Perception of Impact: Implementing the Principle of Partnership in Programming the Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria

Author: Desislava Hristova Kurzydowski, *PhD Candidate*

The applicability of the partnership principle in the programming and implementation of the Structural Funds in Bulgaria is a litmus test for CSOs' ability to exercise impact. The process of EU accession is invariably linked to the issue of absorbing resources provided by EU for social and economic development. The principle of partnership provides opportunities for a wide range of actors to contribute to the process of defining the scope and priorities of this development. The case study, however, argues that Bulgaria still experiences serious challenges in this regard. Although the legislative and institutional preconditions are in place, the application of partnership is weak and, to a great extent, perfunctory.

This case study claims that there is no coherence in the logic of application of the partnership principle and there are no clear-cut mechanisms for identifying the partners; CSOs are not equally represented at the designated forums. This suggests that specific limitations to CSOs influencing the process exist and cases of arbitrariness in the administrative structures hinder the applicability of the partnership principle. This conclusion has implications for the overall possibilities for CSOs to exert impact on decision- and policy-making.

5. External Environment: Extents of Corruption

Authors: Diana Velcheva

Zdravka Georgieva

Elitsa Markova, *PhD Candidate*

The TI Corruption Index shows a significant decline in ranking for Bulgaria. Corruption still represents a serious contextual feature of Bulgaria. This case study examines in depth how the high level of corruption in Bulgarian society affects the development of civil society. Focusing on the case of the management of EU funds in Bulgaria,

where CSOs are beneficiaries, the paper claims that cases of mismanagement and malpractice in the procedures raise doubts about the transparency and accountability of the mechanisms applied. The over-centralisation of management combined with the lack of clear procedures and transparency of the respective authorities' activities makes the Operational Programmes vulnerable to suspicions about irregularities. These uncertainties and isolated cases of unlawful practices further complicate the environment, thus creating rather unfavourable conditions for civil society development.

Appendix 4. Data Matrix

1) Dimension: Civic Engagement	40.5
1.1. Extent of socially-based engagement	15.9
1.1.1. Social membership 1	8.7
1.1.2. Social volunteering 1	6.7
1.1.3. Community engagement 1	32.4
1.2. Depth of socially-based engagement	29.9
1.2.1. Social membership 2	14.6
1.2.2. Social volunteering 2	9.9
1.2.3. Community engagement 2	65.2
1.3. Diversity of socially-based engagement	71.0
1.3.1. Diversity of socially-based engagement	71.0
1.4. Extent of political engagement	17.4
1.4.1. Political membership 1	11.3
1.4.2. Political volunteering 1	7.6
1.4.3. Individual activism 1	33.4
1.5. Depth of political engagement	32.3
1.5.1. Political membership 2	24.1
1.5.2. Political volunteering 2	20.2
1.5.3. Individual activism 2	52.6
1.6. Diversity of political engagement	76.2
1.6.1. Diversity of political engagement	76.2

2) Dimension: Level of organisation	56.1
2.1. Internal governance	93.5
2.1.1. Management	93.5
2.2. Infrastructure	54.9
2.2.1. Support organisations	54.9
2.3. Sectoral communication	71.1
2.3.1. Peer-to-peer communication 1	70.8
2.3.2. Peer-to-peer communication 2	71.3
2.4. Human resources	30.6
2.4.1. Sustainability of HR	30.6
2.5. Financial and technological resources	69.7
2.5.1. Financial sustainability	63.2
2.5.2. Technological resources	76.3
2.6. International linkages	16.8
2.6.1. International linkages	16.8

3) Dimension: Practice of Values	46.4
3.1. Democratic decision-making governance	71.7
3.1.1. Decision-making	71.7
3.2. Labour regulations	34.0
3.2.1. Equal opportunities	37.4
3.2.2. Members of labour unions	43.3
3.2.3. Labour rights trainings	33.3
3.2.4. Publicly available policy for labour standards	21.9
3.3. Code of conduct and transparency	54.3
3.3.1. Publicly available code of conduct	32.6
3.3.2. Transparency	75.9
3.4 Environmental standards	20.6
3.4.1. Environmental standards	20.6
3.5 Perception of values in civil society as a whole	51.4
3.5.1. Perceived non-violence	15.3
3.5.2. Perceived internal democracy	93.4
3.5.3. Perceived levels of corruption	8.5
3.5.4. Perceived intolerance	60.0
3.5.5. Perceived weight of intolerant groups	88.6
3.5.6. Perceived promotion of non-violence and peace	42.4

4) Dimension: Perception of Impact	43.6
4.1. Responsiveness (internal perception)	29.6
4.1.1. Impact on social concern 1	29.1
4.1.2. Impact on social concern 2	30.1
4.2. Social Impact (internal perception)	67.8
4.2.1. General social impact	61.6
4.2.2. Social impact of own organisation	74.0
4.3. Policy Impact (internal perception)	43.5
4.3.1. General policy impact	35.6
4.3.2. Policy activity of own organisation	38.1
4.3.3. Policy impact of own organisation	56.9
4.4. Responsiveness (external perception)	35.6
4.4.1. Impact on social concern 1	25.7
4.4.2. Impact on social concern 2	45.5
4.5. Social Impact (external perception)	71.7
4.5.1. Social impact selected concerns	86.3
4.5.2. Social impact general	57.1
4.6. Policy Impact (external perception)	48.6
4.6.1. Policy impact specific fields 1–3	57.1
4.6.2. Policy impact general	40.0
4.7. Impact of CS on attitudes	8.2
4.7.1. Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members	0.5
4.7.2. Difference in tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members	0.0
4.7.3. Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members	10.9
4.7.4. Trust in civil society	21.4

5) Contextual Dimension: Environment	61.2
5.1. Socio-economic context	55.3
5.1.1. Basic Capabilities Index	98.5
5.1.2. Corruption	36.0
5.1.3. Inequality	70.8
5.1.4. Economic context	15.7
5.2. Socio-political context	70.4
5.2.1. Political rights and freedoms	90.0
5.2.2. Rule of law and personal freedoms	79.2
5.2.3. Associational and organisational rights	91.7
5.2.4. Experience of legal framework	39.4
5.2.5. State effectiveness	52.0
5.3. Socio-cultural context	57.9
5.3.1. Trust	17.9
5.3.2. Tolerance	64.2
5.3.3. Public spiritedness	91.6

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