

INVITATION

“The Engagement of Albanian CSOs in the EU Accession Process: Challenges and Opportunities”

“Tirana Times” Library

10:00-11:30

Date: 16 December 2022

Context

EU accession has been a long-held aspiration for Albania and the overarching driving force behind democratization reforms in the country and the wider region. The inclusion of non-state actors, such as civil society organizations (CSOs), in the accession negotiation process has taken a prominent role.

With the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Centre Science Innovation for Development has conducted research focused on the role and practices of engagement of Albanian civil society organizations – including think tanks, watchdogs, community, and service provision organizations, youth organizations, advocacy organizations and networks – in the country’s EU accession process by drawing on an analysis of existing publications and on the perceptions of civil society organizations themselves.

This study provides a brief overview of the support that the EU has given to civil society in candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Western Balkans during their accession process. Literature points out that while EU support in CEE countries prior and/or during accession has managed to increase the engagement of civil society and its exchange with state actors on policy matters, it has not necessarily resulted in a lasting inclusion of non-state actors in the decision-making processes in the post-accession period.

The analysis then dives into the legislative and institutional framework that governs accession negotiations in Albania. It examines the National Council for European Integration and the European Integration Partnership Platform, as key structures for promoting an enabling environment for civil society organizations to meaningfully participate in the EU integration process.

To better understand the experiences of Albanian civil society organizations and their contribution to the EU-related processes, the study relies on an online survey of 122 organizations, informal networks, and groups. In this way, this study presents their perspectives regarding practices of engagement, challenges, and opportunities. This public event will serve to present and discuss the findings with relevant stakeholder.

You are kindly invited to contribute to this discussion by joining us on 16th December at 10:00 at Tirana Times Library.

AGENDA

Presentation of findings

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09:45-10:00 Event registration

<i>10:00-10:10</i>	<p><i>Welcoming remarks</i> Michael Weichert, Director, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Tirana</p>
<i>10:10-10:25</i>	<p><i>Presentation of the key findings</i> Dr. Blerjana Bino, Research Team Leader</p>
<i>10:25-10:55</i>	<p><i>Keynotes: Untapped potential of CSOs and mutual benefits of the EU integration process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Gentian Elezi, European Studies Institute, University of Tirana ▪ Arjan Dyrmishi, Executive Director, Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance
<i>10:55 – 11:15</i>	<p><i>Reflections and Discussions</i></p>
<i>11:15- 11:30</i>	<p><i>Concluding Remarks</i> Orkidea Xhaferaj</p>
<i>11:30</i>	<p><i>Reception and informal networking</i></p>