

Euroregional Center for Democracy

ANNUAL REPORT

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The Euroregional Center for Democracy (CED) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, founded on December 16, 1999 by the Open Society Foundation - Romania. The Center promotes democracy and stability in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

CED is located in Timișoara, a city in the Western part of Romania. Timișoara represents an ideal learning location for a laboratory seeking to devise programs of great importance for the future of democracy and regional stability. This multi-ethnic and multi-cultural space encourages the dialogue between actors that promote democratic values.



Objectives

- **To build and consolidate democracy**

by providing innovative ongoing and long-term opportunities for communication through interactive seminars, workshops, panels, in order to help democratic institutions

- **To promote partnership**

between regional, national and local non-governmental organizations and institutions and help them develop regional projects, as well as undertake joint efforts

- **To strengthen the institutional capacity of the NGO community**

through programs that ensure the development of available human resources, as well as of the organizational, institutional and legal framework in order to facilitate the elaboration of long-term strategies for viability and sustainability

- **To raise regional community awareness**

of common transition-related issues and of the relationship between diversity and democracy by initiating debates on contentious issues in order to overcome prejudices, stereotypes and isolation.

Program implementation

Areas of activity

I. Regional cross-border cooperation

II. Education for democracy

III. Advocacy

In 2006, CED continued its support to strengthen the third sector from South Eastern Europe, by providing programs that addressed civil society organisations (CSOs) from Romania, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Bulgaria. The objective was to give them opportunities to build and develop their capacities to plan their sustainability, work in networks and coalitions, elaborate advocacy campaigns or work with public institutions in the process of elaborating decisions and preventing corruptive practices.

Also, CED promoted mechanisms of communication between citizens and structures representing them and the local administration from Timișoara and Arad (web page, newspaper column, radio shows, phone line) and trained them on laws regarding access to public information, transparency of decision and how to influence the decision making process.

Students and youth organisations from Timișoara were trained in leadership, advocacy, negotiation and conflict management, during CED's first initiative of the campaign for transparency in higher education launched in 2005, aimed at strengthening students' and youth organisations' role to ensure transparency and involving them in preventing and fighting acts of corruption.

SMEs from Făget and Szentes were enabled to develop and implement cross-border businesses, a step forward in CED's support to create regional networks among cross-border actors (NGOs, public institutions, SMEs).

Several studies have been elaborated, on subjects concerning CED's areas of activity :

- A comparative evaluation of the third sector from Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine regarding its involvement in the public policies making process
- Identifying main problems citizens from Timișoara are confronted with in their relation with the local public administration and supporting them in their approach and involvement in local authorities' activities and decision making process
- Mapping the full dimension of corruption, its forms, mechanisms and consequences in public state-funded universities from Timișoara University Center
- Identifying the similarities and differences between the Romanian and Bulgarian CSOs who offer social services, legislation in the field and types of services provided.

Web pages were created as means of information and communication for and between the target groups:

- www.ecomunicare.ro
- www.ccc.ecomunicare.ro
- www.integritate.ro
- <http://nextmile.eu>
- <http://dkmt.regionalnet.org/cd>

I. Regional cross-border cooperation

The Next Mile of the European Civil Society Infrastructure

(Boosting the potential of Bulgarian and Romanian Civil Society Organisation to Improve the Social Environment)

A project of the Open Society Institute – Sofia

Partners: Euroregional Centre for Democracy - Romania, European Roma Information Office - Brussels, Belgium, Civil Society Development Foundation – Hungary

Objective: Strengthening of the role of Bulgarian and Romanian Third Sector in improving social environment through improved institutional capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) and stimulation of new forms of co-operation within and among them

Target group: CSOs and their networks in Romania and Bulgaria, like service providers in the social sphere, organisations directly representing vulnerable groups, advocacy centres working for the interest of vulnerable groups, think-tanks, research and resource centres, policy makers engaged in the social sphere, representatives of vulnerable groups in Romania and Bulgaria, such as ethnic minorities (i.p. Roma), disabled persons (with physical and/or mental disabilities), children and young people with specific social problems (deviations, risk or criminal behaviour), whereas people suffering from double (multiple) marginalisation represent the project's priority target group

Outcome:

- Research studies
- Training sessions on *Organizational development and sustainability, Participatory research and development, Advocacy skills, Networking skills*
- A platform for delivery of consultations
- Web Portal <http://nextmile.eu>

Future activities:

- Publication of information and methodology materials
- Personnel exchange programmes among Romanian and Bulgarian CSOs and CSOs from EU countries
- Activities related to spreading and adoption of good practices in the social sphere

Budget: 51.500 Euro, European Union, *Networking Programme, Civil Society Component, Romania and Bulgaria*



I. Regional cross-border cooperation

Engaging Civil Society Organizations for Participatory Democracy

Partners: Conflict Resolution Institute (INRECO), Moldova and Regional Agency for Cross-border Cooperation Lower Danube Euroregion, Ukraine

Objectives:

- To identify and analyze key issues, challenges and appropriate responses regarding the present situation of NGO involvement in the decision-making processes at local level in Timiș County (Romania) and in the cities of Chișinău (Moldova) and Odessa and Reni (Ukraine)
- To build capacities in NGOs identified to work in networks and coalitions
- To assist NGOs to mobilize individuals, expert groups and ideas within their constituencies to develop stakeholder-inclusive advocacy strategies for enhanced civic participation

Target group: Representatives of NGOs and local public authorities from Moldova (Chișinău and towns), Ukraine (Reni and towns) and Romania (Timișoara)

Outcome:

- *Public Participation in Eastern Europe: Opportunities and Challenges* - Study regarding the engagement of NGOs from Moldova, Romania and Ukraine in the implementation of local policies
- 26 participants trained in *Advocacy and Coalition management*

Future activities:

- Two advocacy campaigns in Moldova and Ukraine to identify and promote the most efficient mechanisms to communicate between the civil society and representatives of public institutions

Budget: 11.740 USD, Open Society Foundation București, *East East: Partnership Beyond Borders* program



Public Participation in Eastern Europe: Opportunities and Challenges. Study regarding the engagement of non-governmental organisations from Moldova, Romania and Ukraine in the process of implementation of local policies

The study focuses on the issue of public participation, by using a mixt methodology, including legal analysis, documentation, survey and case study. The research offers organisations of the civil society from Moldova, Romania and Ukraine a first comparative evaluation of the third sector from the perspective of its involvement in the public policies making process. The study has a practical purpose, aiming to be a useful tool for professionals from the non-governmental sector and also for the officials from the local administration. The municipalities used as reference were Chișinău - Republic of Moldova, Timișoara - Romania and Izmail - Ukraine.

I. Regional cross-border cooperation

Local Development through Economic and Tourist Cross-Border Mobility - Center for Communication - Promotion and Cross-Border Marketing, Făget – Szentes

Partners: City Hall of Făget, Romania and City Hall of Szentes, Hungary

Aim of the project: Local economic development of Făget and Szentes areas by attracting tourists and investors – at cross border level – by using integrated services for informing, training, and consulting, with the aim to ensure the running of the tourist and economic capacity of the two areas.

Objectives:

- Increase the economic development of the two areas by a raising number of regional cross-border partnerships between SMEs and create a regional SMEs' network
- Create a flow of information between the two areas to increase the cross-border mobility of physical persons (tourism) and economic agents (business)

Outcome:

- One IT Center and two Centers for Communication and Cross-border Marketing in Făget and Szentes
- Five training sessions for participants from Romania and Hungary (representatives of tourism agencies and providers of tourism services, NGOs, public institutions, etc.) that enabled them to develop and implement cross-border businesses
- Two *Fairs for Tourist and Economic Promotion* in Timișoara and Szentes
- Web Portal <http://dkmt.regionalnet.org/cd>

Budget: 69.760 Euro, 48.540 Euro (69.58%) Ministry of European Integration, *Small Funds Romania – Hungary*, 21.220 Euro (30.42%) CED



II. Education for democracy

Pro Communitas

Partner: City Hall of Timișoara

Aim of the project: To strengthen the local partnership between citizens/non-governmental organisations and the public administration in order to identify and find solutions to problems the community is confronted with.

Objectives:

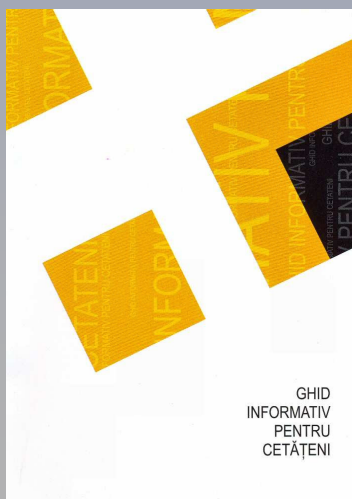
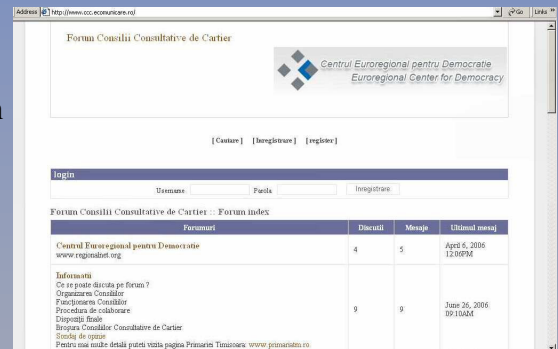
- To raise the elected representatives' accountability (Timișoara City Hall and City Council)
- To identify main problems citizens are confronted with in their relation with the City Hall
- To involve the District Consultative Councils of Timișoara in disseminating information about ways of participating in the decision-making process of the local public administration
- To inform citizens about structure, duties and functioning of main local institutions (Timișoara City Hall, City Council, Timiș County Council and Prefectura) and NGOs' role in the community

Target group: Non-governmental organisations from Timișoara, citizens of Timișoara, elected representatives in the City Hall, City Council, Timiș County Council and Prefectura Timiș.

Outcome:

- Three meetings of NGOs, District Consultative Councils and elected representatives at local level
- 22 members of the DCC were trained on laws regarding *the access to information of public interest* and *transparency of decision* in public administration
- Survey applied in Timișoara, with the aim of identifying the problems the local community is confronted with, increasing its level of information about DCC and NGOs and finding methods to get involved in the decision-making process at a local level
- Publishing of an 'Informative Guide for Citizens'
- Permanent information of citizens and NGOs through a column in the weekly *Publitim* and the electronic newsletter *Agenda ONG Timiș*
- Forum: www.ccc.ecomunicare.ro

Budget: 42.320 Euro, 32.070 Euro (75.78) PHARE, *Strengthening Civil Society in Romania, Development of the NGO Sector*, 10.250 Euro (24.22%) CED



Informative Guide for Citizens

The material was conceived to support citizens in their approach to the local public administration institutions, when trying to find out information, send a request or a complain. It contains data regarding the services and departments of the City Hall of Timișoara, a list of members and Commissions of the Local Council and their contact details, services and departments of Timiș County Council, the District Consultative Councils that are functioning in Timișoara, the local non-governmental organisations active in various areas and also the laws that support citizens' involvement in local authorities' activities and decision-making process.

II. Education for democracy

Open Local Governance through Mutual Information and Consultation

Partner: City Hall of Arad

Aim of the project: Increase cooperation and civil society's consultative role (NGOs, citizens) in the process of elaborating decisions at the level of public administration.

Objectives:

- To improve non-governmental organisations' capacity to work together with public institutions in the process of elaborating decisions
- To develop, in the city of Arad, a channel of communication and information among representatives of civil society and citizens and elected representatives (in Arad City Hall, City Council, County Council and Prefectura, and Parliament members from Arad county)
- To involve citizens in the process of elaborating decisions
- To promote mechanisms of communication between citizens and elected representatives

Target group: Non-governmental organisations from Arad, local public administration, citizens of Arad, elected representatives at the level of Arad City Hall and City Council, Arad County Council and Prefectura, and elected representatives of Arad county in the Parliament (Senators and Deputies).

Outcome:

- Workshop on *Public hearings* with 12 most active and representative NGOs, the 18 participants being trained on transparency of decision and decision-making and influencing processes within the public administration
- Multiple interactive communication channels between representatives of the civil society, citizens and the elected representatives were developed: web page www.ecomunicare.ro, newspaper column, radio show, phone robot, polling, etc.
- Four meetings were organized targeting NGOs and elected representatives, with a total number of 105 participants
- 52 radio shows, 36 columns in *Arad Expres* newspaper

Budget: 38.400,41 Euro, 32.233,3 Euro (83,94%) PHARE, *Strengthening Civil Society in Romania*, 6.167,11 Euro (16,06%) CED

III. Advocacy

Transparency and Integrity in Higher Education – A Program to Develop a Coalition of Non-governmental Organisations to Prevent Corruption

Partner: Academy of Advocacy, Timișoara

Aim of the project: Strengthen the role of student and youth organisations to ensure transparency in higher education by creating and implementing mechanisms to poll, monitor and elaborate a common strategy to prevent and reduce corruptive practices.

Specific objectives:

- Mapping the full dimension of corruption, its forms, mechanisms and consequences in higher education
- Establish a coalition of non-governmental organisations capable of elaborating, implementing and maintaining a mechanism of prevention and reduction of corruption in the University sector
- Ensure transparency in higher education by improving existing information channels and elaborating a common plan to prevent acts of corruption

Target group: Student and youth non-governmental organisations and professors affected by the existing mechanisms, which do not ensure their involvement in developing strategies to prevent and fight acts of corruption.

12 student and youth organisations active in Timișoara University Center: 3 organisations from each University

4 task-groups to monitor acts of corruption and abusive behaviour formed of 5 persons/University (students and professors)

Ethics committees from the four universities: University of West, Politehnica University, Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, University of Medicine and Pharmacy ‘Victor Babeș’, all government funded.

Budget: 48.655 Euro, 42.405 (47.15%) PHARE, *Strengthening Civil Society in Romania, Democracy, Human Rights, State of Law and Independence of Justice*, 6.250 (12.85%) CED

Outcome:



• Improved the mechanisms to inform on acts of corruption within the universities: web page www.integritate.ro, phone line 0800 844 844 and 0256 436634

• Research on Corruption in Timișoara University Center – Students report, Professors report, Administrative staff report, Synthetic report, presented during the *Transparency and Integrity in Higher Education Conference*



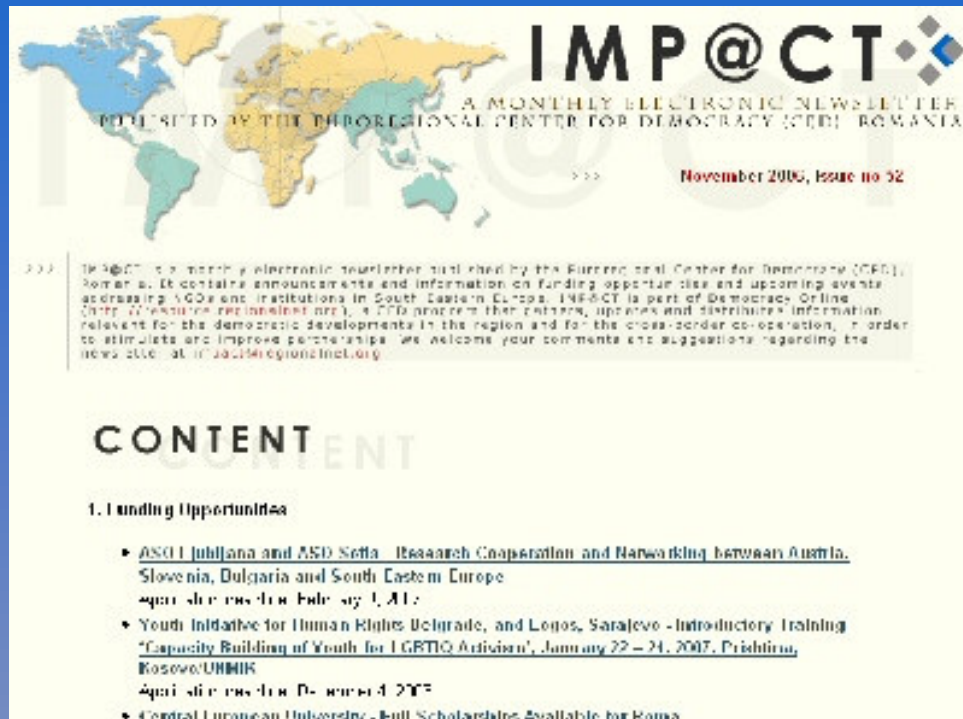
• 52 students trained in *Coalition Management, Advocacy, Leadership, Negotiation and Conflict Management*

• Developed a *Coalition for Transparency and Integrity*, formed of students, student organisations, initiative groups and Rectorates of the four universities with an aim to reduce and prevent practices of corruption

• Elaborated a *Plan to prevent and fight corruption in the Academic sector*

• Four campaigns for information and awareness raising and lobby and advocacy organized within the universities

Publications



IMP@CT

IMP@CT is a monthly electronic newsletter published by CED. It contains announcements and information on funding opportunities, conference and workshop attendance, research grants, scholarships and calls for project proposals addressing NGOs and institutions in South Eastern Europe.

The main goal of the IMP@CT Newsletter is to secure the flow of essential information and to encourage the participation and involvement of organisations, local authorities, institutions and individuals in South Eastern Europe in the opportunities presented.

IMP@CT started to be electronically distributed in December 2001. At the 52th issue there are 8063 subscribers. The newsletter is sent by email but can also be accessed online on CED's website.

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