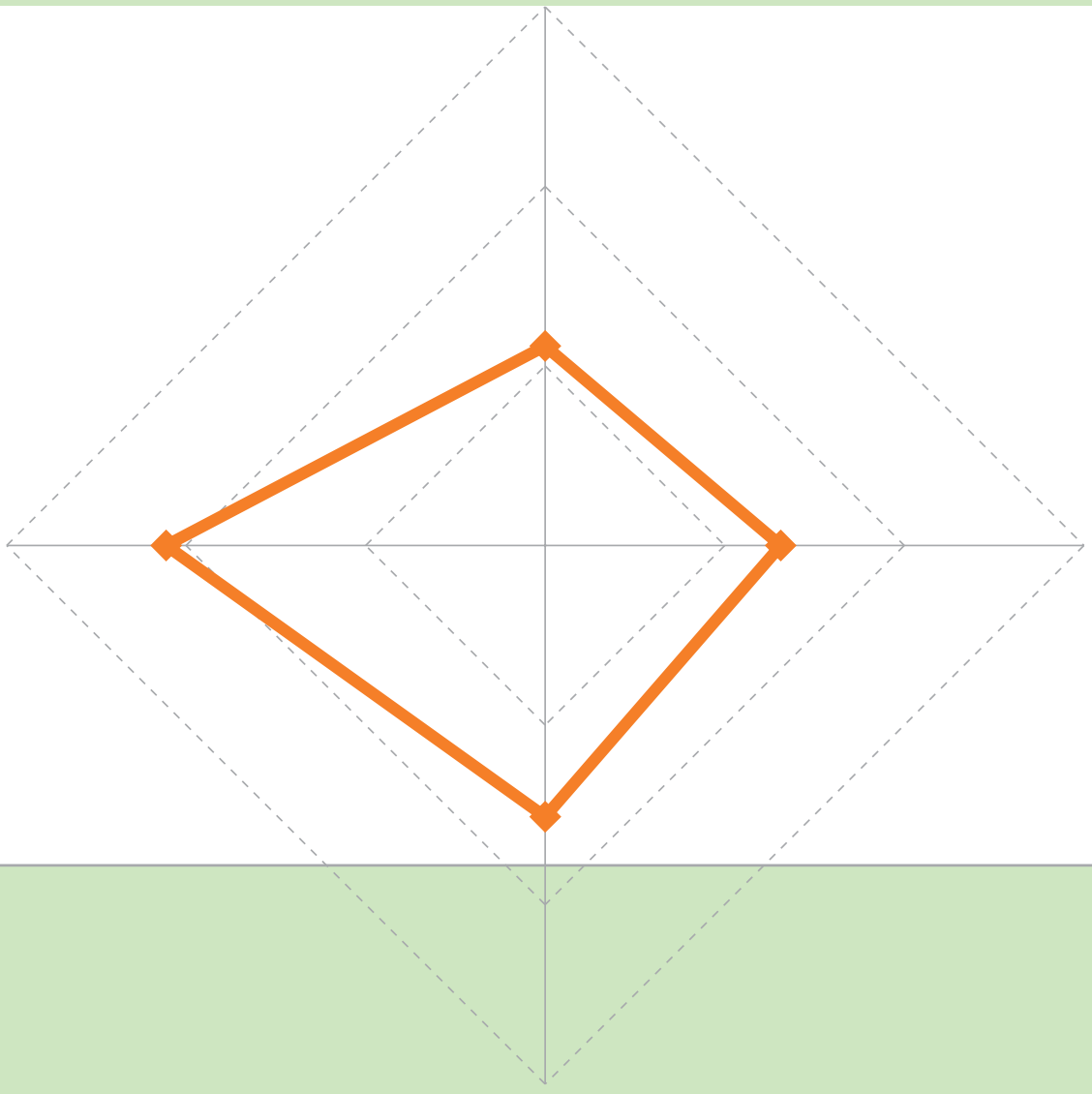
BALKAN ASSIST

ASSOCIATION FOR PARTNERSHIP AND CITIZEN ACTIVITY SUPPORT

CIVICUS
World Alliance for Citizen Participation

CIVIL SOCIETY WITHOUT THE CITIZENS

An Assessment of Bulgarian Civil Society 2003-2005



DEZA
DDC
DSC
SDC
COSUDE

Balkan Assist Association (BAA) for partnership and citizen activity support

CIVIL SOCIETY WITHOUT THE CITIZENS

AN ASSESSMENT OF BULGARIAN CIVIL SOCIETY (2003 – 2005)

CIVICUS CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX REPORT FOR BULGARIA

Author team:
Diana Andreeva
Ivanka Doushkova
Dora Petkova
Dotcho Mihailov (team leader)

Sofia, 2005

National Index Team:
Diana Andreeva, Dora Petkova, Ivanka Doushkova, Dotcho Mihaylov

Support team:
Slaveia Hristova, Galia Spasova, Iva Taralezhkova, Sergey Dzhokanov

National Advisory Group:
Vassil Gromkov, Georgy Shivarov, Donka Mihaylova, Dimitar Sotirov, Ivo Hristov, Ilian Iliev, Lenko Lenkov, Liubitsa Tomova, Maria Zlatareva, Petia Atzinova, Reneta Veneva and Sonia Enilova

Public Council:
Angel Naydenov, Georgy Arnaudov, Ginka Chavdarova, Georgy Lozanov, Mihail Nedeltchev and Yovko Yovkov

Media review:
Slavina Dimitrova

Balkan Assist Association (BAA) for partnership and citizen activity support
CIVICUS Civil Society Index
An international action-research project coordinated by CIVICUS:
World Alliance for Citizen Participation

With the kind support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

We would like to express our gratitude to **Star City Ltd.** for rendering assistance to the publication of the present report.

Foreword

Since its establishment Balkan Assist Association is trying hard to strengthen civil society, and to reinforce its role and influence in governance and political decision-making.

That is why the Civil Society Index Project was not only a professionally challenging, but also a great opportunity to enrich our experience and knowledge regarding the diversity of Bulgarian civil society, the specific characteristics of different social groups and regarding the challenges the third sector is facing.

During the project implementation, we found new partners who shared our mission and unreservedly supported our efforts. We met many people from different parts of the country and we discovered interesting and ingenious persons and civil initiatives. At the same time we became part of the CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation network and exchanged valuable ideas and practices with colleagues and organizations from other countries.

The relevant project objectives and the new and unique project methodology provoked the interest of people and media in Bulgaria. This motivated the project team members, the members of the National Advisory Group and the Public Council who worked competently and dedicatedly entirely on a voluntary basis.

When formulating the findings and conclusions included in the present report we were absolutely realistic and self-critical as we aimed to make everybody aware of their role and place in Bulgarian society. This fact gave rise to an interesting and profound discussion and initiated a wide debate, not only at the national CSI workshop, but at many other events, which will further continue in partnership with interested organizations, individuals and institutions.

The implementation of the CSI project in Bulgaria was made possible thanks to the support of CIVICUS, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Chitalishta Foundation for Development, the members of the National Advisory Group, the Public Council and the participants in the regional consultations and in the National CSI Conference.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of them and invite them to continue their cooperation with us so that we can jointly turn the many recommendations of this report into practice!

Slaveia Hristova
Executive director
Balkan Assist Association

Acknowledgements

The Civil Society Index (CSI) study was carried out by Balkan Assist Association for partnership and citizen activity support (BAA). The project's approach and research methodology were developed by the international non-governmental organisation CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The study was supported financially by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Bulgaria.

To ensure a realistic picture of the status of civil society in Bulgaria, a National Advisory Group (NAG) was established, to include a diverse set of members, representative of the various civil society segments and geographic regions of Bulgaria, and involving representatives of the business, culture and academic communities. This country report would not have been possible without the hard work of the National Advisory Group members who have been part of the Civil Society Index project from the outset; they approved the civil society definition, the conceptual framework and project methodology developed by CIVICUS, thus rendering validity to the research. The NAG provided valuable opinions, advice and solutions to the research team. Since we do not want to depersonalize their dedicated work, we acknowledge the following individuals: Vassil Gromkov (Vidin Puppets' Theatre), Georgi Shivarov (Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce, Sofia), Donka Mikhailova (Znanie Association, Lovech), Dimitar Sotirov (Bulgarian Media Coalition, Sofia), Ivo Hristov (National Assembly, an expert to the Law Matters Commission), Ilian Iliev (Public Center for Sustainable Development and Environment, Varna), Lenko Lenkov (Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation, Sofia), Lyubitsa Tomova (Association of South-West Municipalities, Blagoevgrad), Maria Zlatareva (UNDP, Sofia), Petya Atzinova (Agency for Regional Economic Development, Stara Zagora), Reneta Veneva (National Alliance for Volunteer Action, Plovdiv) and Sonya Enilova. (Bourgas Tourist Association).

A unique contribution to the project was made by the establishment of a Public Council, which included prominent individuals widely recognized for their authority and professionalism. The task of the council was to come up with a strategy to overcome the civil society weaknesses identified as a result of the research. The reputation of the council members largely contributed to promoting this innovative approach in Bulgaria. For their part, the members of the Public Council were never kept at a distance from project activities and with their civil society expertise and innovative vision made the meetings, consultations and research an exhilarating experience. Special appreciation goes to Angel Naidenov (Student Council with the Sofia University), Georgi Arnaudov (Star City Ltd., Sofia), Ginka Chavdarova (National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria, Sofia), Georgi Lozanov (Bulgarian Media Coalition, Sofia), Mikhail Nedelchev (Citizen Association, Sofia) and Yovko Yovkov (mayor of Sevlievo Municipality).

This country report is the outcome of the efforts of the Civil Society Index team who worked hard during the course of one year to carry out all of the studies included in the CIVICUS methodology. The team included Diana Andreeva (project coordinator, BAA) and Dotcho Mihaylov (vice–chair of Balkan Assist Board and a manager of ASA Socio- Economic Analyses; civil society researcher and expert within the project). The team was supported by Iva Taralezhkova (project coordinator, BAA), Galia Spasova (a member of the Board of BAA), Sergey Dzhokanov (media consultant, BAA) and Slaveya Hristova (executive director of BAA).

We very much appreciate the contribution of Slavina Dimitrova who conducted an in-depth survey of many publications in her monitoring of the media's coverage of civil society. She told us she took real pleasure in this work and felt enriched by all of the information. We hope that the experience was indeed enjoyable and she will continue to be committed to work in the area of civil society.

This report draws on ideas, arguments and examples brought up during the course of the work of the NAG, discussions within the research team, the Regional Stakeholder Consultations and the National Conference, which was held at the end of project to discuss and build upon the project findings. All of these stakeholders and participants contributed strongly to this report.

Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge the CIVICUS CSI team and particularly Mahi Khallaf for providing on-going guidance to the Balkan Assist Association and adding more structure and value to our challenging work.

Diana Andreeva

Ivanka Doushkova

Dora Petkova

Dotcho Mihaylov
(Leader of the author team)

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 11
1. Structure 11
2. Environment 12
3. Values 12
4. Impact 13
Conclusion 14

INTRODUCTION 15

I. CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH 17
1. Project Background 17
2. Project Approach and Methodology 18
2.1 Conceptual Framework 18
2.2 Project Methodology 19
2.3 Linking Research with Action 21
2.4 Project Outputs 21

II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN BULGARIA 22
1. Specifics of Bulgarian Civil Society 22
2. Definition of Civil Society Used in this Study 23
3. Mapping Civil Society in Bulgaria 24

III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY 27
1. Structure 27
1.1 Breadth of Citizen Participation 28
1.2 Depth of Citizen Participation 30
1.3 Diversity within Civil Society 30
1.4 Level of Organization 31
1.5 Inter-relations within Civil Society 33
1.6 Resources 34
Conclusion 35
2. Environment 36
2.1 Political Context 36
2.2 Basic Rights and Freedoms 39
2.3 Socio-Economic Context 40
2.4 Socio-Cultural Context 42
2.5 Legal Environment 43
2.6 State-Civil Society Relations 45

2.7 Private Sector-Civil Society Relations 46
Conclusion 47
3. Values 48
3.1 Democracy 48
3.2 Transparency 49
3.3 Tolerance 50
3.4 Non-Violence 51
3.5 Gender equality 51
3.6 Poverty Eradication 52
3.7 Environmental Sustainability 53
Conclusion 53
4. Impact 54
4.1 Influencing Public Policy 54
4.2 Holding State and Private Corporations Accountable 55
4.3 Responding to Social Interests 56
4.4 Empowering Citizens 57
4.5 Meeting Societal Needs 59
Conclusion 61

IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN BULGARIA 62
1. Strengths 62
2. Weaknesses 63

V. RECOMMENDATIONS 64

VI. CONCLUSION 66

VII. NEXT STEPS 68

LIST OF APPENDICES 69
Appendix 1: Lists of the National Advisory Group and the Public Council 70
National Advisory Group 70
Public Council 70
Appendix 2: Research Studies
Conducted in Bulgaria as Part of the CSI Project Implementation 71
Regional stakeholder survey 71
Regional Stakeholder Consultations 72
Representative Sociological Survey 72
Media Review 73
Review of the corporate social responsibility 73
Appendix 3: The Scoring Matrix 74
Appendix 4: Bibliography 83

Tables and Figures

Tables

Table I.1: Countries participating in the CSI implementation phase 2003–2005 17
Table II.2: CSO categories 24
Table III.1.1: Indicators assessing the extent of citizen participation 28
Table III.1.2: Indicators assessing depth of citizen participation 30
Table III.1.3: Indicators assessing diversity of civil society participants 30
Table III.1.4: Indicators assessing level of organization 31
Table III.1.5: Indicators assessing inter-relations within civil society 33
Table III.1.5.2: Cooperation 34
Table III.1.6: Indicators assessing civil society resources 34
Table III.1.6.1: Average % of recourses 34
Table III.2.1: Indicators assessing political context 36
Table III.2.2: Indicators assessing basic rights and freedoms 39
Table III.2.3: Indicator assessing socio-economic context 40
Table III.2.4: Indicators assessing socio-cultural context 42
Table III.2.4.2: Tolerance 42
Table III.2.5: Indicators assessing legal environment 44
Table III.2.5.2: Allowable advocacy activities 44
Table III.2.6: Indicators assessing state-civil society relations 45
Table III.2.6.1: Autonomy 45
Table III.2.7: Indicators assessing private sector–civil society relations 46
Table III.3.1: Indicators assessing democracy 48
Table III.3.2: Indicators assessing transparency 49
Table III.3.3: Indicators assessing tolerance 50
Table III.3.4: Indicators assessing non-violence 51
Table III.3.5: Indicators assessing gender equality 51
Table III.3.5.1: Gender equity 52
Table III.3.6: Indicator assessing poverty eradication 52
Table III.3.7: Indicator assessing environmental sustainability 53
Table III.4.1: Indicators assessing influencing public policy 54
Table III.4.2: Indicators assessing holding state and private corporations accountable 55
Table III.4.3: Indicators assessing responding to social interests 56
Table III.4.3.2: Public trust in CSOs 57
Table III.4.4: Indicators assessing empowering citizens 57
Table III.4.5: Indicators assessing meeting societal needs 59

Figures

Figure 1: Civil society diamond 11
Figure I.1.1: Civil society diamond tool 19
Figure II.1: Country information 22
Figure: II.3: Social forces map 25
Figure III.1.1: Subdimension scores in structure dimension 27
Figure III.2.1: Subdimension scores in environment dimension 36
Figure III.2.1.1: Political rights–participation in referenda 37
Figure III.2.2.1: Freedom House civil liberties rating for Bulgaria (score, status) 40
Figure III.2.4.3: Public spiritedness 43
Figure III.3.1: Subdimension scores in values dimension 48
Figure III.4.1: Subdimension scores in impact dimension 54
Figure III.4.5.2: Meeting societal needs directly 60
Figure VI.1: Bulgaria civil society diamond 66

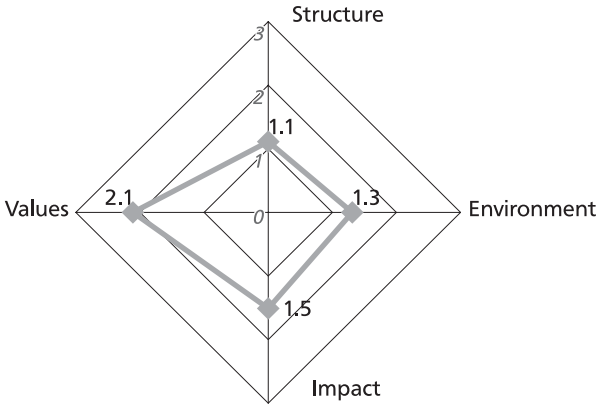
List of Acronyms

ALDA ..... Association of Local Democratic Agencies
BAA ..... Balkan Assist Association
BGN ..... Bulgarian leva
CS ..... Civil Society
CSI ..... Civil Society Index
CSO ..... Civil society organisation
CPI ..... Corruption Perception Index
CEMR ..... Council of European Municipalities and Regions
ENTO ..... European Network of Training Organizations
EU ..... European Union
GDP ..... Gross domestic product
IMF ..... International Monetary Fund
OIDP ..... International Observatory for Participatory Democracy
LOGIN ..... Local Government International Network
NAG ..... National Advisory Group
NCO ..... National Coordinating Organisation
NGO ..... Non-governmental organisation
NHIF ..... National Health Insurance Fund
NIT ..... National Index Team
NEPLE ..... Non-for-Profit Legal Entities
NFPLEA ..... Not-for-Profit Legal Entities Act NFPLEA
NPO ..... Non-Profit organisation
OSF ..... Open Society Fund
PIO ..... Public Interest Organisations
RSC Survey 2004 ..... Regional Stakeholder Consultation Survey, CSI Project, 2004
RSConsultations 2004 ..... Regional Stakeholder Consultations, CSI Project 2004
BCSS survey 2004 ..... Bulgarian Civil Society Sociological Survey, CSI Project, 2004

Executive Summary

The Civil Society Index (CSI) is a research project that aims to assess the state of civil society in countries around the world. The project is being implemented simultaneously in approximately 50 countries, with project coordination provided by CIVICUS. The ultimate goals of the project, as formulated by CIVICUS, are to enhance the sustainability of civil society and to promote and strengthen its contribution to positive social change. Balkan Assist Association (BAA) was given the mandate to conduct the CSI assessment in Bulgaria.

Civil society diamond for Bulgaria ***Figure 1***



The CSI employs 72 indicators, which are grouped in 25 subdimensions. These are then consolidated along four basic dimensions of civil society: **structure**, **environment**, **values and impact**. In Bulgaria, these civil society indicators were studied using in-depth primary and secondary research, including: a representative population survey, a survey of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a review of key media.

Figure 1, the Civil Society Diamond, depicts the scores of the four main dimensions. It shows that Bulgaria has a moderately sized civil society, with rather strong values.

1. Structure

The establishment of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Bulgaria post-1989 is related to the emergence of programmes and grant schemes designed to support the institutional development of NGOs. Thus, the sector was formed with a top-down approach, led by donor demands and visions and not by the Bulgarian citizens.

Due to the historical origin and the focus of CSOs' current operations, they are characterised by low levels of citizen involvement in their activities. Yet, there is a rather strong citizen engagement at the community level outside of formal CSOs, such as involvement in informal and unregistered groups, typically formed to address

problems such as housing conditions or local infrastructure.

The Bulgarian civil society sector is financially heavily dependent on the central and local governments and international donors. Although this is hard to prove with facts and figures, there is the perception of "a new wave" of CSOs, which are created to absorb future funding from the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds (SCF). International donors will close down most of their programmes after 2007, when Bulgaria is scheduled to join the EU. Due to the expected drop in foreign funding and due to low levels of financial support from citizens, from 2007 onwards, CSOs are likely to be dependent on support solely from the government. This raises the fear that CSOs might no longer be able to keep their critical distance from government and to act as a voice for citizen's interests and concerns.

One of the strengths of Bulgaria's civil society is its well-developed institutional structure. A positive outcome of the "donor-driven" emergence of the sector is its high level of professionalism, including the presence of self-regulation mechanisms and umbrella organisations. In many towns, CSOs provide important support to the process of decentralizing government social development programmes and funds. However, the third sector can only be considered 'civil' if CSOs turn to and involve local communities. Only then can they become successful citizen-based lobbying and 'watchdog' organizations of government policies. There have been recent indications that CSOs are developing a self-awareness which includes this particular public mission, namely to mobilize community participation and represent the interests of particular groups.

2. Environment

Bulgarian civil society operates in a moderately enabling environment, where particularly the overall political and socio-economic factors provide stable and positive conditions. The growth of civil society is hampered by indifferent attitudes in the Bulgarian business sector, as well as by widespread apathy and mistrust among the Bulgarian population.

Laws and regulations have been established to ensure the smooth registration and operation of CSOs in Bulgaria. Surveys, however, indicate that CSOs would like to see more incentives for donors and government support. The legal environment does not restrict direct participation of citizens in governance, but does not provide particular incentives for mechanisms for direct democracy either. However, there have been positive developments, such as a legal requirement for municipal authorities to present their budgets for public discussion.

Partnerships between civil society and the government continue to work primarily on a project-based approach, although the government and parliament have established a practice of involving certain CSOs in the work of their committees. Generally, however, interaction between the government and civil society is most often built on "opportunistic" goals of utilizing financial resources available from international or domestic government funds. Project-based partnerships can be useful, provided they employ mechanisms to involve citizens in decision-making.

3. Values

Despite working in a "top-down" approach, and "without serious involvement of the citizens," as stakeholders consulted for the project expressed it, CSOs are building a civic culture in Bulgaria. A large number of grant scheme-funded projects in Bulgaria help shape a public sensitivity to previously unknown values, such as good governance, participation, tolerance, integration of disadvantaged groups, solidarity with the poor, environmental protection, personal responsibility for health and intolerance for corruption.

CSOs in Bulgaria practice and affirm these values by filling the gap in state service provision through social assistance and by addressing poverty and educational issues. In this sense, CSOs play a support function with respect to the government, rather than the citizens. Consequently, civil society's values penetrate society through the public nature of their projects, rather than through their immediate impact on citizens. CSOs' activities to promote democracy, for example, often take the form of seminars, evaluations and conferences. To the public, these events occur not so much in the local community, but in the media. Similarly, CSOs active in fighting corruption are few in number but have high visibility and contribute to the public awareness of the problem. However, since people hear and know about advocacy and public education CSOs through the media, and not through active involvement in their activities, CSOs are often seen as elitist in the eyes of ordinary people.

The "silence" of the civic spirit in Bulgaria is frequently commented on, and to a certain extent, is also the result of the elitist nature of CSOs. The lack of appropriate links and intermediation between political parties, CSOs and ordinary people leave the latter without representation in public life. Thus, in moments of particular significance, such as the economic crisis in 1996–1997, the spontaneous civil protests occurred without the involvement of NGOs or other civil formations. In other cases, public opinion has failed to find organizational representation or proper media coverage. During the Kosovo and Iraq crises, for example, most citizens considered Bulgaria's involvement to be unacceptable. However, representatives of CSOs remained silent or took on the role of experts "with the mentality of statesmen," who "corrected public opinion," instead of being its voice. This particular nature of Bulgarian civil society forces citizens into the role of silently protesting voters and not as active participants in civic and political life.

4. Impact

In general terms, civil society's impact on the development of Bulgaria has received a mixed assessment. The role of CSOs in promoting good governance and development has so far been most successful in the establishment of a positive legal environment for good governance and public participation. Some positive examples are the advances made in social development, decentralization and access to information. There are also cases of impact by CSOs on policy implementation, although only few organizations advocate for policy change on specific issues.

The sector's influence on addressing the everyday problems of the majority of the citizens has been unsatisfactory. Much of civil society's social work, due to high donor interest in the area, is focused on overcoming the marginalisation of vulnerable groups. However, the high attention paid to certain vulnerable groups by CSOs is perceived by many citizens as favouring a certain social group over the majority of people, who also feel they have incurred losses from the political and economic transition.

One of the major shortcomings of civil society is its inability to empower ordinary citizens and local communities. Only a few organizations involve the community in their decision-making on programmatic activities. While CSOs expect resources from the central and local governments, they are doing little to empower their own target groups within the community. Thus, participation of citizens in civil society mainly boils down to the role of passive beneficiaries.

Civil society has a limited impact on the behaviour of large businesses. People are often afraid to hold companies responsible for violations of their rights or failures to meet obligations. The activity of trade unions is focused mostly on bargaining with the government for common social policies rather than on protecting the labour rights of employees in private companies.

Conclusion

These findings are only part of the many insights generated on the basis of the results of the consultations and data-collection conducted as part of the Civil Society Index project in Bulgaria. The research activities and consultations brought to light many specific weaknesses, as well as particular strengths and trends in the development of Bulgarian civil society. The stakeholder meetings also raised many concerns of local NGOs, most often connected to their future activities and to their funding sources. Consequently, much time was spent formulating strategies for further actions.

Despite some structural problems, Bulgarian civil society is based on strong institutional and ethical footings, and achieves certain impact on society at large. The problem most often mentioned was connected to providing resources for NGO activities when the current donors withdraw. This issue was discussed at the National Conference and as a result a task force was established to work on a bill allowing the allocation of 1% of people's taxes in favour of a specified NGO. Other important recommendations that were made related to involving ordinary citizens more in civil society activities, returning to traditional civic values and activities which are indigenous to Bulgarian society, and promoting direct democracy. The strengths, weaknesses and recommendations addressed here, are described in greater detail in sections IV and V of the report.

Introduction

This document presents the results of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) in Bulgaria, carried out by the Balkan Assist Association (BAA) from December 2003 to March 2005, as part of the international CSI project coordinated by CIVICUS and currently implemented in more than 50 countries.

The CSI is a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world. The project links this assessment with a reflection and action-planning process by civil society stakeholders, aiming to strengthen civil society in those areas where weaknesses or challenges are detected. By seeking to combine valid assessment, broad-based reflection and joint action, the CSI attempts to make a contribution to the perennial debate on how research can inform policy and practice.

In each country the CSI is implemented by a National Coordinating Organisation (NCO), guided by a National Advisory Group (NAG) and the CSI project team at CIVICUS. The NCO–BAA in Bulgaria—collects and synthesizes data and information on civil society from a variety of primary and secondary sources. This information is employed by the NAG to score the 72 CSI indicators, which together seek to provide a comprehensive assessment of the state of civil society. The findings are then discussed at a national conference, where civil society stakeholders identify specific strengths and weaknesses of civil society as well as develop recommendations on how to strengthen civil society. The CSI project team at CIVICUS provides training, technical assistance and quality control to the NCO throughout the project implementation.

The CSI was conceived with two specific objectives: (1) providing useful knowledge on civil society and (2) increasing the commitment of stakeholders to strengthen civil society. The first objective inherits a certain tension between country-specific knowledge and knowledge comparable cross-nationally on a global scale. CIVICUS sought to resolve this tension by making it possible to adapt the methodology and the set of more than 70 indicators to country-specific factors. While BAA made use of this option to some extent, we generally kept to the overall project framework.

For BAA, the participation in this international initiative provided the opportunity to study the current status, prospects and challenges facing civil society in Bulgaria. At the same time, the project unearthed useful information about working mechanisms and practices to strengthen civil society applied in other countries which are currently implementing the CSI.

Structure of the Publication

Section I, *"The CSI Project: Background & Methodology,"* provides a detailed history of the CSI, its conceptual framework and research methodology.[1]

Section II, *"Civil Society in Bulgaria,"* provides a background on civil society in Bulgaria and describes the use of the civil society concept as well as the definition employed by the CSI project.

Section III, entitled *"Analysis of Civil Society,"* is divided into four parts–Structure, Environment, Values and Impact–which correspond to the four main dimensions of the CSI. The presentation of the results according to individual dimensions and sub-dimensions is intended to be a resource repository, and readers looking for an overall interpretation of the report should refer to the conclusion.

Section IV, *"Strengths and Weaknesses of Bulgarian Civil Society,"* summarises the ideas, arguments and opinions raised at the National CSI Conference, which was held on 10 March 2005 in Sofia. Close to 80 participants from CSOs and academic institutions had the opportunity to comment on, criticise, and supplement the findings through their participation in plenary sessions and small group discussions.

Section V, *"Recommendations,"* provides the recommendations raised by participants at the National CSI Conference and other project events. These recommendations focus on concrete actions to strengthen civil society and its role in Bulgaria.

[1] See Appendix 3: The Scoring Matrix.

I. Civil Society Index Project and Approach

1. Project Background

The idea of a Civil Society Index originated in 1997, when the international non-governmental organisation CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation published the *New Civic Atlas* containing profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (CIVICUS 1997). To improve the comparability and quality of the information contained in the *New Civic Atlas*, CIVICUS decided to embark on the development of a comprehensive assessment tool for civil society, the Civil Society Index (Heinrich, Naidoo 2001; Holloway 2001). In 1999, Helmut Anheier, the director of the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics, played a significant role in the creation of the CSI concept (Anheier 2004). The concept was tested in fourteen countries during a pilot phase lasting from 2000 to 2002. Upon completion of the pilot phase, the project approach was thoroughly evaluated and refined. In its current implementation phase (2003–2005), CIVICUS and its country partners are implementing the project in more than fifty countries (see Table I.1).

Table I.1: Countries participating in the CSI implementation phase 2003–2005[2]

1. Argentina	16. Ecuador	31. Italy	46. Romania
2. Armenia	17. Egypt	32. Jamaica	47. Russia
3. Australia	18. England	33. Lebanon	48. Scotland
4. Azerbaijan	19. Ethiopia	34. Macedonia	49. Serbia
5. Bangladesh	20. Fiji	35. Malawi	50. Sierra Leone
6. Bolivia	21. Gambia	36. Mauritius	51. Slovenia
7. Bulgaria	22. Georgia	37. Mexico	52. South Korea
8. Burkina Faso	23. Germany	38. Mongolia	53. Taiwan
9. China	24. Ghana	39. Mozambique	54. Turkey
10. Colombia	25. Greece	40. Nepal	55. Uganda
11. Costa Rica	26. Guatemala	41. Nigeria	56. Ukraine
12. Croatia	27. Honduras	42. Northern Ireland	57. Uruguay
13. Cyprus	28. Hong Kong (VR China)	43. Palestine	58. Uzbekistan
14. Czech Republic	29. India (Orissa)	44. Poland	59. Vietnam
15. East Timor	30. Indonesia	45. Puerto Rico (USA)	60. Wales

In Bulgaria, the project was implemented from December 2003 to March 2005 by Balkan Assist Association (BAA). BAA applied for this project in full awareness that no such comprehensive survey culminating in a country report on civil society has been carried out in Bulgaria. Follow-up steps and initiatives to overcome weaknesses were also identified as a result of the study. Moreover, the goal of the CSI project is fully in line with the mission of BAA to

[2] This list encompasses independent countries as well as other territories in which the CSI has been conducted.

promote citizen participation in developing and implementing new practices for direct citizen participation, good governance and working to improve legislation relating to citizen participation and civil rights.

In May 2003, BAA applied to conduct the CSI project in Bulgaria and was accepted by CIVICUS. In September 2003, BAA staff member, Diana Andreeva, attended a CIVICUS CSI training workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. Subsequently, project activities got underway.

2. Project Approach and Methodology

The CSI uses a comprehensive project implementation approach and a broad range of research methods. At the core of the CSI lies a broad and encompassing definition of civil society, which informs the overall project implementation process. To assess the state of civil society in a given country, the CSI examines four key dimensions of civil society, namely its structure, external environment, values and impact on society at large. Each of these four dimensions is composed of a set of sub-dimensions, which again are made up of a set of individual indicators. These indicators form the basis for the CSI data collection process, which includes secondary sources, a population survey, regional stakeholder consultations, a media review and a series of case studies. The indicators also inform the scoring exercise undertaken by a National Advisory Group (NAG). The indicator scores, as well as research and assessment findings are discussed at a gathering of key stakeholders, whose task is to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations on key priority actions to strengthen civil society. The CSI project approach, conceptual framework, and research and assessment methodology are described in detail in the remainder of this section (Heinrich 2004).[3]

2.1 Conceptual Framework

How to define civil society?

At the heart of the CSI's conceptual framework is obviously the concept of civil society. CIVICUS defines civil society as the space between the family, state and the market, where people come together to pursue their interests (CIVICUS 2004). In this respect, and different from most other civil society concepts, the CSI has two interesting features. First, it aims to go beyond the usual focus on formal and institutionalised CSOs, and to take account of informal coalitions and groups. Second, while civil society is sometimes perceived as a sphere in which positive activities and values reign, CIVICUS seeks to also include negative manifestations of civil society in the assessment. The concept therefore covers not only charitable associations or environmental organisations but also groups such as skinheads and aggressive sports fans. The CSI assesses not only the extent to which CSOs support democracy and tolerance, but also the extent to which they themselves are intolerant or even violent.

How to conceptualise the state of civil society?

To assess the state of civil society, the CSI examines civil society along four main dimensions:

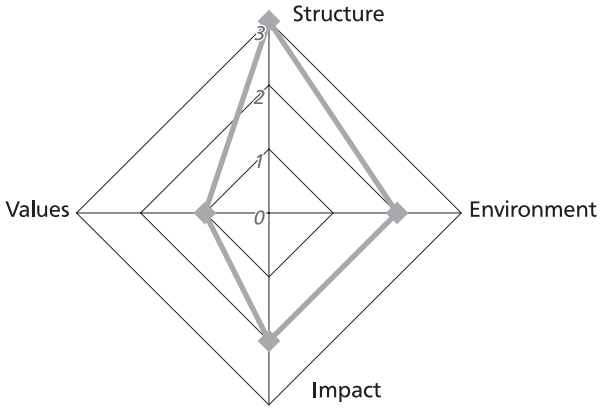
- The ***structure*** of civil society (e.g. number of members, extent of giving and volunteering, number and features of umbrella organisations and civil society infrastructure, human and financial resources);
- The external ***environment*** in which civil society exists and functions (e.g. legislative, political, cultural and economic context, relationship between civil society and the state as well as the private sector);
- The ***values*** practiced and promoted within the civil society arena (e.g. democracy, tolerance or protection of the environment); and

[3] See Heinrich (2004) for a detailed description of the CSI approach.

- The ***impact*** of activities pursued by civil society actors (e.g. public policy impact, empowerment of people, meeting societal needs).

Each of these main dimensions is divided into a set of sub-dimensions which contain a total of 74 indicators.[4] These indicators are at the heart of the CSI and form the basis of the data presented in this report. The indicator – sub-dimension – dimension framework underpinned the entire process of data collection, the writing of the research report, the NAG's assessment of Bulgarian civil society and the presentations at the National Conference. It is also used to structure the main part of this publication.

Civil society diamond tool ***Figure I.1.1***



To visually present the scores of the four main dimensions, the CSI makes use of the Civil Society Diamond tool (see Figure I.1.1 for an example).[5] The Civil Society diamond graph, with its four extremities, visually summarises the strengths and weaknesses of civil society. The diagram is the result of the individual indicator scores aggregated into subdimension and then dimension scores. As it captures the essence of the state of civil society across its key dimensions, the Civil Society Diamond can provide a useful starting point for interpretations and discussions about how civil society looks like in a given country. As the Civil Society Diamond does not aggregate the dimension scores into a single score, it cannot and should not be used to rank countries according to their scores on the four dimensions. Such an approach was deemed inappropriate for a civil society assessment, with so many multi-faceted dimensions, contributing factors and actors. The Civil Society Diamond also depicts civil society at a certain point in time and therefore lacks a dynamic perspective. However, if applies over time, it can be used to chart the development of civil society over time as well as compare the state of civil societies across countries (Anheier 2004).

2.2 Project Methodology

This section describes the methods used to collect and aggregate the various data generated and used by the CSI project.

2.2.1 Data Collection. The CSI recognized that, in order to generate a valid and comprehensive assessment of civil society, a variety of perspectives need to be included – insider, external stakeholder and outsider views and information from a variety of sources, ranging from the local, regional to the national level. The CSI therefore includes the following set of research methods: (1) review of existing information, (2) regional stakeholder consultations, (3) population survey, (4) media review and (5) fact-finding studies.

[4] See Appendix 3: Scoring Matrix.

[5] The Civil Society Diamond was developed for CIVICUS by Helmut Anheier, see Anheier (2004).

It is believed that this mix of different methods is essential to generate accurate and useful data and information, but also to accommodate the different variations of civil society, for example in rural vs. urban areas etc. Also, the CSI seeks to utilize all available sources of information to avoid 're-inventing research wheels' and wasting scarce resources. Lastly, the research methodology is explicitly designed to promote learning and, ultimately, action on the part of participants. Besides informing the deliberations at the final national conference, data collection processes also aim to contribute to participant learning. This is done, for example, through group-based approaches that challenge participants to see them as part of a "bigger picture," think beyond their own organisational or sectoral context, reflect strategically about relations within and between civil society and other parts of society, identify key strengths and weaknesses of civil society and assess collective needs. It is important to note that the CSI provides an aggregate need assessment on civil society as a whole and is not designed to exhaustively map the various actors active within civil society. Yet, it does examine power relations within civil society and between civil society and other sectors and also identifies key civil society actors when looking at specific indicators under the structure, values and impact dimensions.

Due to resource considerations, in Bulgaria, it was not possible to implement the entire list of proposed data collection methods. The focus was on the regional stakeholder consultations and the national population survey. The specific methods implemented in Bulgaria are listed below in the sequence of their implementation:

- Secondary sources: The project team began with a review of information from the many existing studies and research projects on civil society and various related subjects. This information was synthesised into an overview report on the state of civil society in Bulgaria;
- Regional stakeholder survey: Representatives from CSOs, government and business, as well as other stakeholders were surveyed in eight selected regions. Around 110 individuals were contacted and 73 questionnaires were completed;
- Regional stakeholder consultations: The consultations were conducted in eight regions in Bulgaria with the support of UNDP Chitalishta Project. About 105 people took part in the consultations to discuss the results of the survey and other topics.
- Representative population survey: A representative sample of 1000 adults in Bulgaria was surveyed. Questions were asked regarding their membership in CSOs, the level of charitable giving, volunteering and their opinions on the role of CSOs.
- Media monitoring: Two media sources – a national and a regional newspaper were monitored over a period of three months regarding their coverage of civil society actors, related topics and values. However, this information was only used to a limited extent for this country report.[6]

2.2.2 Data Aggregation. The various data sources are collated and synthesized by the CSI project team in a draft country report, which is structured along the CSI indicators, sub-dimension and dimensions. This report presents the basis for the indicator scoring exercise carried out by the NAG. In this exercise, each score is rated on a scale of 0 to 3, with 0 being the lowest assessment possible and 3 the most positive. The scoring of each indicator is based on a short description of the indicator and a mostly qualitatively defined scale of scores from 0 to 3.[7] This NAG scoring exercise is modelled along a "citizen jury" approach (Jefferson Centre 2002), in which citizens come together to deliberate, and make decision on a public issue, based on presented facts. The NAG's role is to give a score (similar to passing a judgement) on each indicator based on the evidence (or data) presented by the National Index Team (NIT) in form of the draft country report.

In Bulgaria, the scoring process was conducted as follows: First, the members of the NAG scored each indicator individually. Then, an average of these scores was calculated for each indicator. The subdimensions and dimensions were calculated through averaging. The final scores of the four dimensions (structure, environment, values and

[6] For further information on the media review, see Appendix 2.

[7] See Appendix 3.

impact) were plotted to generate the Civil Society Diamond for Bulgaria. Then, the NAG spent time discussing and interpreting the shape of the Civil Society Diamond as well as the potential causal relations among the scores for the four dimensions.[8]

2.3 Linking Research with Action

As was mentioned before, the Civil Society Index is not a strictly academic research project. As its declared objective is to involve the civil society stakeholders in the research process, to contribute to discussions about civil society and to eventually assist in strengthening civil society, it falls into the category of action-research initiatives.

One of our major successes in implementing this project was the involvement of 20 civil society experts who assisted the CSI implementation from the very beginning. Fourteen of them participated in the NAG, which was tasked with significant responsibilities within the project, such as approving the definition for civil society and the conceptual framework for the CSI, proposed by CIVICUS, help identifying regions where consultations with regional CSOs were to be held, and scoring the CSI indicators for Bulgaria. The other six experts formed the Public Council for the project which contributed ideas for project activities and promoted the significance of the CSI and of civil society development in general in Bulgaria.

Another interactive element of the CSI was the eight regional stakeholder consultations, in which a total of 105 civil society stakeholders participated. These consultations were held in Vidin, Pleven, Shoumen, Blagoevgrad, Kurdzhali, Vratsa, Bourgas and Stara Zagora. The aim was to bring together representatives of a wide range of CSOs, as well as stakeholders from government, business, universities and donor agencies. They were encouraged to discuss their views on Bulgarian civil society and its actors, their own citizen activities and practices, and most importantly, their opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of Bulgarian Civil Society.

Last, a day-long National Conference was held at the end of the project. The goals of the conference were: 1) to discuss the Bulgarian National Report and Civil Society Diamond; 2) to build a common understanding on the state of the Bulgarian Civil Society and 3) to formulate proposals and initiatives for overcoming the weaknesses identified as a result of the project.

At the National Conference, the Civil Society Diamond and the study's main findings were presented. Participants had the opportunity to discuss these in four small groups, and to offer their comments and their proposals for overcoming the weaknesses in the Bulgarian Civil Society.

2.4 Project Outputs

The CSI implementation in Bulgaria resulted in a wide range of products and outputs, including:

- A comprehensive country report on the state of civil society in Bulgaria;
- A list of key recommendations and proposals for strengthening civil society;
- A well-structured working group built to work on a bill to allow the possibility of transferring 1% of an individual's taxes to a specified NGO;
- Wide media coverage of many project activities, at both the national and regional level and
- Consultative meetings with more than 100 civil society stakeholders, discussing the state of civil society in Bulgaria.

[8] See Section VII.

II. Civil Society in Bulgaria

1. Specifics of Bulgarian Civil Society

The vision of civil society is often described as a return to reciprocity in political and social arrangements, and as the third force through which the traditional hierarchy of state and subject can be unseated. Empirically, the term is used by political scientists to encompass all sectors of society, and all arrangements within it, that exist outside the state, market, and family. Nowadays, civil society is seen as the promoter of a range of political and social goals in society. In short, civil society has become thought of as simultaneously encompassing everything that is not the state and as representing a set of inherently democratic values (Jefferson Centre 2002), However, within the context of this project, the definition of civil society that is used does not assume civil society to be promoting democratic values, but rather seeks to empirically assess the extent to which the civil society actually represents and promotes these values.

Figure II.1: Country information[9]

Country size:	110,910 sq km
Population:	7,500,000
Population density:	70.3
Population under 15 years:	14.4%
Urban population:	69.8%
Form of government:	Parliamentary Democracy
Freedom rating:	Free
Seats in parliament held by women:	26.3
Language:	Bulgarian
Ethnicity:	Bulgarian (83.6%), Turk (9.5%), Roma (4.6%), other (2.3%)
Religion:	Bulgarian Orthodox (83.8%), Muslim (12.1%), other (4.1%)
HDI Score & Ranking:	0.796, 56th
GDP per capita:	7,130
Unemployment rate:	14.3%

In Bulgaria, civil society has a long history, going back to the early 19th century. The first Bulgarian civic formations emerged in the early 1800s in what today is Romania, prior to the National Revival Period and the purpose was primarily cultural and educational. One such organization was the Bulgarian Book Publishing Society, which was set up in 1824–25 in Bucharest. The most common form of civil CSOs during the National Revival Period were reading clubs ("chitalishte"), with the first three chitalishta arising in 1856 in Shoumen, Lom and Svishtov, but grew in number to 131 in only 14 years.

After Bulgaria's Liberation in 1878, the development of civil society continued. In 1933, Parliament passed the Act on Regulating the Activities of Foundations. Statistical yearbooks for the Kingdom of Bulgaria each had a chapter on social organizations and support for civic associations. The 1942 Yearbook lists 147 civic associations, including: 47 trade unions; 43 cultural and educational societies; 15 charitable societies and unions; 12 scientific societies and unions 17 societies and unions for physical recreation and 18 other formations. The comparatively large number of trade and professional unions indicates high levels of awareness and mobilization of group and professional interests. Cultural and educational societies, in their turn, promoted the right to education for

[9] Sources: The World Factbook 2004, Human Development Report, Freedom House and Bulgarian National Statistical Institute.

every human. In other words, civil society in Bulgaria developed both along the lines of protecting private interest and of promoting "the public good" (UNDP 2001).

This pattern of Bulgaria's civil society was reconfirmed in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The desire to satisfy the needs of a given community, not of certain discriminated groups or of a global agenda, as frequently happens in other places around the world, was the driving force for civil society in Bulgaria during the final years of Communism. The first structured civic events in the years of the socialist regime were the organized protests of the late 1980s when the citizens of Rousse protested against the chlorine pollution in their city. This marked the birth of a range of local civic organizations and initiatives. In the early and mid-1990s, the main incentive for civic forms of participation in Bulgaria was to avoid friction in the relationship between citizens and local authorities. In recent years, a major driving force for civil society is the implementation of development projects (Kuiranov 2004).

2. Definition of Civil Society Used in this Study

There are various definitions of civil society, and both the theoretical definition and the actual aspects of civil society differ in different parts of the world. Because of its global scope and its ambition to attain universal applicability around the world, the CSI project adopts the following universal definition for civil society, namely: "the arena, outside family, government, and market where people voluntarily associate to advance common interests." By describing it as an arena, the definition stresses civil society's role to provide public space where various societal value systems and interests interact.

The project implementation in any country begins with a validation and adoption of the definition of civil society by the respective National Advisory Group. In Bulgaria this was done at the first meeting of the NAG, which was held on 26 February 2003. The validity of the definition proposed by CIVICUS for the Bulgarian context was discussed by the NAG. The main points of the discussion addressed the location of the arena, whether it falls "outside" the family, government and market or "in-between" them. There are potential reasons for locating civil society within each of these locations, since people associate in order to advance common interests, somewhere beyond the other three spheres but at the same time in-between them. Thus, the definition was adopted by the NAG. The only change from the original definition was that civil society is the arena **in-between** government, market and family where people associate in pursuit of their common interests.

Special attention was paid to the fact that the definition does not only refer to formal civic organizations, but also includes informal groups and associations that arise spontaneously. Thus, it was stated repeatedly that NGOs are only one part of civil society. In implementing most of the research activities, the CSI Project in Bulgaria tried to cover not only NGOs, but also informal groups and associations and the common citizens, by studying their civic practices and attitudes. Unfortunately, more often than not (according to data gathered through regional stakeholder consultations and the media review) civil society in Bulgaria is associated primarily with the activity of NGOs. However, according to the NAG members' observations shared at their first meeting, NGOs often do not enjoy the confidence of citizens, since their programmes and priorities are not seen as addressing the immediate needs of people. This initial assessment was later on confirmed by regional NGO representatives at the Regional Stakeholder Consultations–2004 as well as verified by results of the population survey.

At the first NAG meeting the different categories of CSOs in Bulgaria were discussed and accepted. The starting point for the discussions was the CIVICUS list of CSO categories. From that list the following categories were selected (or added) as relevant to the Bulgarian context.

Table II.2: CSO categories

	CSO Category
1	Religious organizations
2	Advocacy CSOs (for example citizen activities, social justice, human rights etc
3	Service CSOs (1. services to municipalities and regions; 2. in the area of healthcare, social services etc.)
4	Educational and research organizations (i.e. think tanks, resource centres, organizations connected to the public education)
5	Media
6	Gender CSOs
7	Student and Youth Organizations
8	Organizations working on the problems of children and young people
9	Associations of people with disabilities – poor, homeless, landless, emigrants, refugees
10	Professional organizations (guilds, branch organizations)
11	Groups or organizations at community level (i.e. support groups, parent groups, community boards, chitalishta etc.)
12	Organizations with economic interests (trade unions, chamber of commerce, cooperatives etc)
13	Ethnical organizations
14	Environmental CSO
15	Organizations connected to Arts, Culture and Traditions
16	Sports and Tourism CSOs
17	Charity organizations (incl. donors)
18	Political Parties
19	Networks, federations and coalitions
20	Social movements (i.e. peace movement)
21	Action-research, Innovation and Information CSO

Source: NAG's list of CSOs

3. Mapping Civil Society in Bulgaria

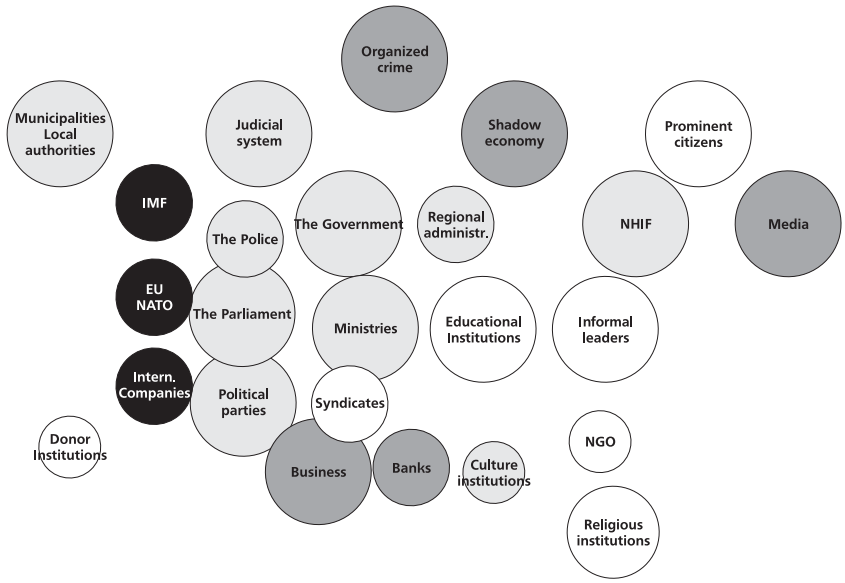
What does civil society look like in Bulgaria? How does it relate to broader social forces in the country? To explore these issues further, the NAG conducted two social forces analysis exercises to collectively create visual "maps" of influential actors in the country. Drawing on participatory rural appraisal methods, these mapping exercises seek to visually present the major forces within society and civil society, respectively, and to investigate the relations between these forces. Using coloured note cards, markers and a board, the NAG members mapped society and civil society in Bulgaria. Their task was to identify and analyze the links and interactions between different social groups as well as the interaction between civil society and other, outside institutions.

The exercise included a two-step process:
1) Identify and analyse the main social actors in Bulgarian society and the power relations between them; and
2) Identify and analyze the main forces and actors within civil society in Bulgaria.[10]

The NAG created the following map of key social forces in Bulgarian society:

[10] Map Legend: Colour of circles: light grey – state; white – civil society; dark grey – business; black – international institutions. Size of Circle: Large circle – the respective social force has a significant influence; medium sized – average influence; small circle – small influence. The distances between the actors denote the kind of relationship that exists (e.g. hostile and strong).

Social forces map ***Figure II.3***



The map shows that the most influential actors in Bulgarian society are found within the state, here, interestingly, the local authorities are seen among the most influential actors. State actors such as parliament, political parties and central government were also mentioned as being very influential and close to each other. Most of the market actors were described as wielding significant power and impact. Organized crime and shadow economies were placed close to the judicial system and somehow away from the business actors. The NAG members felt that there were some institutions which should be placed on the map even though they were international in character. These were the International Monetary Fund, EU and NATO, and some international companies. These were placed close to the main state actors.

As most important actors within the civil society arena some prominent citizens and informal leaders were mentioned. Of course, NGOs also found their place on the map, but somehow aside from the main actors and with moderate influence.

Fully antagonistic or even hostile relations among social forces were not identified.

During the second part of the exercise, the following important Bulgarian CSOs were identified among the main civil society actors. Due to a lack of time the main actors in civil society, in our case NGOs only, were listed without analyzing the relations between them:

- 13 centuries Bulgaria Foundation
- Access to Information Foundation
- Animus
- Balkan Assist Association (BAA)
- BIBA
- Borrow the Nature Foundation
- Bulgaria Helsinki Committee
- Bulgarian Association for Birds Protection
- Bulgarian Association of Regional Development Agencies
- Bulgarian Centre for Non-for-Profit Law
- Bulgarian Media Coalition
- Bulgarian Red Cross
- CARE Bulgaria

- Centre for the Study of Democracy
- Centre for Economic Development
- Centre for European Law
- Centre for Independent Living
- Centre for Liberal Strategies
- Centre for Social Practices
- Chamber of Commerce and Trade-Industry Chamber
- Citizen Association
- Chitalishta
- Entrepreneurship Development Foundation
- Free and democratic Bulgaria Foundation
- Future for Bulgaria Foundation
- Institute for Market economy
- Institute for Regional and International Development
- Local Government Reform Foundation
- Mati Bolgaria
- National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
- NGO Resource Centre Foundation
- Open Society Institute
- Partners Bulgaria Foundation
- S.E.G.A. Foundation
- SOS Kinderdorf – Bulgaria
- Support to Charity in Bulgaria Foundation
- Vasil Levski National Committee
- Women Development Alliance

The organizations listed above, were the result of a brainstorming exercise held with the NAG members. Certainly the most powerful and influential ones were mentioned in the beginning, but the exercise was also influenced by the CSO categories reviewed immediately before conducting the brainstorming exercise. The NAG members did their best to mention the most powerful actors within a variety of CSO categories.

The first NAG meeting in Bulgaria was combined with the first meeting of the CSI project's Public Council. The meeting itself was a success as participants completed their tasks, including the adoption of civil society definition, the conceptual framework and the CSO categories, therefore giving BAA the opportunity to launch the concrete research activities of the project. Another important outcome was the broad ownership and commitment by a large group of eminent individuals in Bulgaria as members of the NAG and Public Council.

III. Analysis of Civil Society

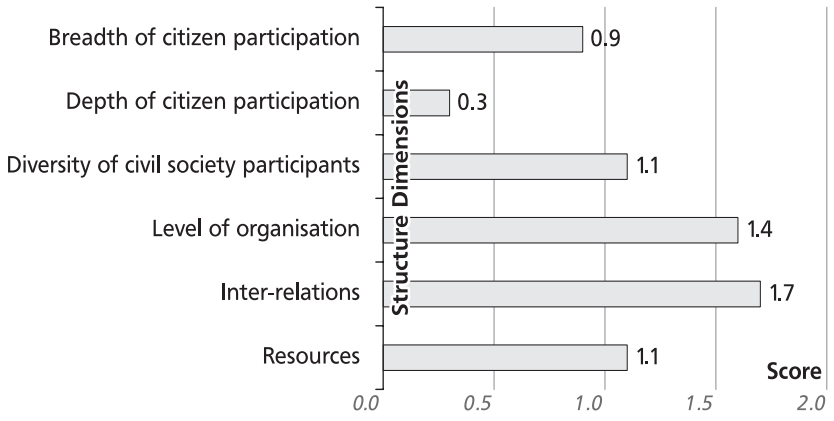
This section presents the bulk of the information and data collected during the course of the CSI project. The analysis is structured by individual indicators, sub-dimensions and dimensions. It is divided into the four dimensions of the CSI Diamond: **Structure, Environment, Values and Impact**. At the beginning of each subsection, a graph provides the scores for the sub-dimensions on a scale from 0 to 3. Findings for each sub-dimension are then examined in detail, and a separate table provides the scores for the individual indicators for each sub-dimension.[11]

1. Structure

The Structure dimension describes and analyzes the overall size, strength and vibrancy of civil society in human, organizational, and economic terms. The score of this dimension is 1.1 indicating a relatively small civil society.

The graph below presents the scores for the six subdimensions within the Structure dimension: breadth of citizen participation, depth of citizen participation, diversity within civil society, level of organisation, inter-relations and resources.

Subdimension scores in structure dimension ***Figure III.1***



[11] For an in-depth understanding of the indicator scores please refer to Appendix 2 –The CSI Scoring Matrix.

1.1 Breadth of Citizen Participation

The breadth of citizen participation subdimension assesses the extent of citizen involvement in Bulgarian civil society and scores 0.9.

Table III.1.1: Indicators assessing the extent of citizen participation

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.1.1	Non-partisan political action	1.0
1.1.2	Charitable giving	1.3
1.1.3	CSO membership	0.4
1.1.4	Volunteer work	0.6
1.1.5	Community action	1.0

1.1.1 Non-partisan Political Action. The Bulgaria Civil Society Sociological Survey 2004 (BCSS survey 2004) measured the extent to which Bulgarians practice some of the common forms of non-partisan political action, including signing petitions (9.7%), participating in meetings to resolve problems in neighbourhoods or districts (9.3%) and calling the police about an irregularity or crime (7.4%). Additionally, about one-third of citizens have engaged in some non-partisan political action aimed at changing rules, laws or policies like making recommendation to the government, participating in NGO projects or sharing their personal opinion in the media on public problems or conflicts.

Despite rather low civic attitudes, people would like to have their voices heard on issues of public importance, for example through referenda on the involvement of Bulgaria in the Iraq crisis (more than 62%), on the decommissioning of the nuclear power plant (more than 70%) and on the electoral system (52%). Thus, there are high expectations for citizens' involvement in decision-making at the local and national levels.

1.1.2 Charitable Giving. Over the past 12 months, only about one-quarter of citizens made donations in cash or in kind (BCSS survey 2004).

Charity is practiced primarily by groups with high income and social status. Donations in cash and in kind are most often made by inhabitants of large cities, middle-aged people, business-owners and people with a good income and higher education. Women donate more often than men (33.7% versus 19.4%).

Despite the rather low levels of actual charitable giving, in the course of the regional stakeholder consultations, the tradition of charity was highlighted as one of the strengths of civil society in Bulgaria. However, at present these are forgotten values that are not currently practiced and must be revived. Stakeholders therefore voiced the need for a clear institutional and legal environment to promote charity in Bulgaria.

1.1.3 CSO Membership. According to the BCSS survey 2004 only one-quarter of citizens took part in any CSO action during the past 12 months and less than 25% of citizens are a member of a CSO. Interestingly, this is a lower percentage than for people engaged in non-partisan political action outside of CSOs.

he highest participation rates are registered for trade unions and charitable organisations (about 8%). Ultimately, the scope of work undertaken by trade unions is connected to issues of working conditions and salaries.

One primary cause for this low level of participation in CSOs is their inability to respond to the everyday problems of people (See Section III.4). CSOs perform primarily political or economic, and not civil functions. Therefore, CSOs are regarded as service providers or advisors to the authorities, not as "citizen" organisations.

Another reason for low levels of participation is that the traditional Bulgarian individualism nourished by pragmatism and the vacuum of values after the demise of communism has not been overcome.

1.1.4 Volunteer work. Results from BCSS survey 2004 revealed that about half of the citizens have helped their neighbours over the past 12 months, and about 45% have helped sick people, elderly people or street children. Another 15% of the respondents have assisted school children by providing volunteer services.

1.1.5 Collective Community Action. The BCSS survey 2004 revealed that over the past 12 months, about one-quarter of citizens have gathered in their community on their own initiative to engage in a collective public action for a common benefit. Typically, this involves activities relating to landscaping or local infrastructure maintenance. Often, these activities are undertaken under the umbrella of tenant councils, which are informal citizen organizations that address problems, make decisions, and organise collective actions.

However, in most communities, a lack self-initiative or recognized local leaders prevents effective citizen involvement. Destructive individualism and paternalistic stereotypes often prevail, and it was suggested that, "it is more important to have a tidy house than tidy up the front door area," "this is the municipality's job" (UNDP 2001). There is also a lack of mechanisms and sufficiently high interest on the part of local authorities to mobilize local communities for public benefit. There are sporadic and campaign related events such as the traditional "spring clean-up," but few other activities are taking place.

Some good practices and projects to mobilize participation in small or neighbourhood communities can be identified. For example, BAA's project to organise and support tenant councils is met with high levels of interest.[12] The idea for this project was developed by proactive Sofia residents who were convinced that the environment could be improved through their own participation. The project was aimed at encouraging citizens' involvement in solving important issues related directly to their living environment and quality of life. Two organizations of tenants and active citizens were established in order to deal with pressing environmental matters.

The chitalishta, which are community libraries and culture centres, are also particularly active in the community, since they are traditional community organisations with long-term roots in the community.

Another cause of collective community actions could be random accidents that touch upon existing problems. Some examples of widely known relevant community actions include:

- At the end of 2004, an accident involving an international truck and killed two pedestrians in Kniazhevo, a district of Sophia, started a citizen protest campaign against large vehicles passing across Kniazhevo. Civil protests started in Malo Buchino village, and after the resolution of the Sofia Municipality to divert heavy vehicles traffic across the village. The protestors were not organized by anyone and received no financial support. They spontaneously reacted to the accident.
- In the beginning of 2005 the inhabitants of the Suhodol district in Sofia began a protest campaign to stop the activity of the dung hill located there. The protest started after the term negotiated in a contract between the mayor of Sofia – Stefan Sofianski and an Initiative Suhodol Committee – expired. Between 50 and 100 people, mainly mothers with children participated in the protest. The protesting citizens had not received financing and distributed information about the protest primarily among neighbours. When asked who "Who Organized you?" the most common answers were "I don't know" or "one lawyer." As in Kniazhevo, "a lawyer" was "accused" of organizing the events. In other words, responsibility for organizing the events was typically attributed to an unfamiliar person, who must be well-educated, with high social status.

[12] See www.balkanassist.bg.

1.2 Depth of Citizen Participation

Whereas the breadth of citizen participation is measured by the extent of citizen involvement in civil society, the depth of citizen participation has to do with quantitative parameters – how *much* do people give to charity, how *much* volunteer work do people do and to how *many* different CSOs do individuals belong to. The score of this subdimension is an extremely low 0.3, indicating a lack of substantive citizen participation by most Bulgarians.

Table III.1.2: Indicators assessing depth of citizen participation

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.2.1	Charitable Giving	0
1.2.2	Volunteering	0.5
1.2.3	CSO membership	0.5

1.2.1 Charity Donations. The average annual cash donation by a Bulgarian citizen is about BGN 19 (approximately $13), which represents about 0.5% of the average annual salary in Bulgaria. The largest component is the donations made by business-owners and people who have participated in the activities of the supported organisation.

1.2.2 Volunteering. According to the BCSS survey 2004, close to two-thirds of citizens engaged in a volunteer activity over the last 12 months. 17 % volunteered one to two times a year, 8.4% volunteer once a month, 6.7% volunteer two to three times a month and 4.7% volunteer once a week, while the remaining 68 % almost never volunteer. The survey also found that volunteering, personal services and patronage are directed to neighbours first and then to other people or strangers.

1.2.3 CSO Membership. The percentage of people who are members of more than one organization is insignificant, indicating a rather low density of citizen involvement (BCSS survey 2004).

1.3 Diversity within Civil Society

The diversity within civil society subdimension determines the extent to which civil society is representative of all social groups. It includes three indicators – representation of social groups among CSO members, representation of social groups among CSO leadership and distribution of civic organizations across the country. The score for this subdimension is 1.1.

Table III.1.3: Indicators assessing diversity of civil society participants

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.3.1	Representation of social groups among CSO members	1.2
1.3.2	Representation of social groups among CSO leadership	1.0
1.3.3	Distribution of CSOs across the country	1.1

1.3.1 Representation of Social Groups among CSO Members. According to the RSC Survey 2004 membership in CSOs correlates highly with medium and high socio-economic status. People who participate in CSOs have a better education, live in large settlements and are middle-aged; citizens with a low socio-economic status are less frequently members of CSOs. According to observations of CSO members, the elite are poorly represented in NGOs. The representatives of local and regional NGOs consider that the elite create their own closed and mostly philanthropic organizations, such as Rotary Clubs and women's business clubs. The

motivation for membership in such an organisation is usually connected to an individual's wish to be part of the elite.

According to data provided by the BCSS survey 2004, there are three social groups which are particularly poorly represented in CSOs: the "rural population" group, "the poor people" group and the "religious minorities" group, which include Muslims, Jews, Armenians and Protestants. However, women are equally represented in CSOs.

The emergence of CSOs in Bulgaria has to do with the emergence of programmes and grant schemes designed to support institutional development. Thus the sector was formed through a top-down approach, placing demand on donors, not on citizens. The CSOs' focus on the institutional environment led to an underestimation of the importance of their civil nature and representation. In many cases, donors developed their own agendas and priorities to which NGOs had to determine how to respond. Thus, rural dwellers, the elderly, the poor and the Roma are often the beneficiaries of projects run by the NGOs, but not members of the NGOs. This is one primary cause of low public confidence in the sector. Like the state, the NGO sector seeks, and makes real efforts, to take care of the poor, but the poor do not participate and are often unaware of these efforts.

1.3.2 Representation of Social Groups among CSO Leadership. According to data available from the RSC Survey 2004, the management level of CSOs closely mirrors the structure of the social groups that make up their membership structure. Thus, whereas women are regarded as equitably represented among CSO leadership, rural dwellers, ethnic minorities, religious minorities and the poor are seen as under-represented.

During the regional stakeholder consultations it was often mentioned that the background of the CSO leader often depends on the CSO category. For example, if it is about women organizations—the leader would be a woman and if it is about a Roma organization–the leader will be from the Roma population.

1.3.3 Distribution of CSOs across Bulgaria (and by Settlements). The RSC Survey 2004 revealed that the civil society sector is seen to be concentrated mostly in the large cities (46%) or at least in urban areas (38 %). Only a small number of respondents (15%) state that CSOs are present in all regions across Bulgaria. Responding to this skewed representation of CSOs, international donors have recently come to realize the need to develop CSOs across Bulgaria and are making certain grant schemes available only to non-Sofia-based organisations.

1.4 Level of Organization

This subdimension looks at the extent of infrastructure and internal organisation within Bulgarian civil society. Table III.1.4 summarizes the respective indicator scores. The score of the level of organization subdimension is 1.4.

Table III.1.4: Indicators assessing level of organisation

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.4.1	Existence of CSO umbrella bodies	1.0
1.4.2	Effectiveness of CSO umbrella bodies	1.8
1.4.3	Self-regulation within civil society	2.1
1.4.4	Support infrastructure	1.3
1.4.5	International linkages	0.6

1.4.1 Existence of Umbrella Bodies. A large number of surveyed CSOs (47%) assess that only "a small portion" of CSOs belong to a federation or a network at the national level. The under-development of civil society networks largely reflects the uncoordinated process of institutional NGO capacity building. So far, there has been a lack of national programmes and strategic priorities regarding funding that required networking, consensus and co-ordination. Only recently and as a consequence of the EU partnership principle, has the state begun to support NGO networks with wide geographic coverage.

Recent years have seen a tendency for organizations with a similar subject of activity to set up, on their own initiative, informal structures and infrastructure to support their activity. For example, the Eco Education Network, national meetings of training organizations, a national organization of licensed training organizations.

Also, under some grant programmes run by international donors, there is an eligibility requirement for organisations to operate in a network. In these cases, such structures emerge but once the project is completed, the network often falls apart.

1.4.2 Effectiveness of CSO Umbrella Bodies. According to the RSC Survey 2004, a large majority of respondents regards CSO umbrella organisations as at least somewhat effective. In most cases, CSOs operating under umbrella structures are more organised and disciplined than those that are not. They are directed by a head office, and have a clear hierarchical structure, policy and strategy. If a CSO is part of a network it usually saves time, energy and resources when initiatives are co-ordinated and adequately distributed. Goals are more efficiently met and the results are multiplied within the network. On the other hand, where the organisation of the network is poor and cumbersome, those that operate within the network can experience difficulties as a result of bureaucracy. The lack of sufficient discretion in decision-making can also be a problem. A frequently expressed concern at the regional stakeholder consultations was that decisions of umbrella organizations are made in a centralized way without considering the opinion of the member organizations. Access to information about the network's activities was cited as another critical area hindering the effectiveness of umbrella bodies in Bulgaria.

There are examples of effective networks, usually at the local or regional level. Some examples include: the Chitalishta Network built under the "Chitalishta" Project, the environmental network of BLUE LINK, the Open Society Fund network of information clubs (OSF); the National Network for Equal Opportunities.[13]

1.4.3 Self-regulation within Civil Society. One positive result of the emergence of the civil society sector influenced and assisted by external donors is the high level of professionalism, exemplified by the presence of self-regulation mechanisms. More than 95% of CSOs surveyed have internal rules and self-regulation mechanisms, which function effectively. These mechanisms include rules of operation, codes of ethics and financial and subject-matter reporting.

Any NGO registered under the Not-for-Profit Legal Entities Act must have a charter describing in detail its goals, objectives, activities, rules of intended operations and development. However, as one CSO representative stated during a regional consultation, "the more there are internal rules, the less respected they are." The statement was not directed against the usefulness of internal rules but against their missing utilization. It was felt that when there are too many rules, which are too precisely elaborated on they are usually not adhered to.

1.4.4 Support Infrastructure. According to the RSC Survey 2004 respondents see a low presence of civil society support organisations in Bulgaria. About half of the respondents state that the existing organisations have a limited scope.

[13] See *Chitalishta* Project, www.undp.bg

Support infrastructure in Bulgaria include: OSF clubs, business centres of the JOBS Programme (MORDPW/UNDP), the NGO Resource Centres in Sofia and Kurdjali, and information centres set up under the EU PHARE Programme.

1.4.5 International Linkage. Of RSC Survey respondents, 47% state, that a small number of CSOs in Bulgaria have international linkages. Not surprisingly, another 29% of respondents indicate that the majority of CSOs with international linkages are working on the national level and are mainly based in Sofia. Small organisations find it difficult to set up international linkages due to a lack of resources, experience and qualified staff.

Some of the larger Bulgarian NGOs are members of the following international networks: Local Government International Network (LOGIN), European Network of Training Organizations (ENTO), and International Observatory for Participatory Democracy (OIDP), Association of Local Democratic Agencies (ALDA), International Union of Local Authorities and its branch, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and South-Eastern Local Authorities Associations Network.

1.5 Inter-relations within Civil Society

The inter-relations within civil society subdimension analyses the relations amongst civil society actors in Bulgaria, and scores 1.7.

Table III.1.5: Indicators assessing inter-relations within civil society

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.5.1	Communication between CSOs	1.8
1.5.2	Cooperation between CSOs	1.6

1.5.1 Communications between CSOs. Despite many efforts by CSOs, communication remains rather weak, both within the civil society sector as well as between CSOs and government institutions. According to the RSC Survey 2004, 52% of CSOs feel that information exchange among CSOs is "moderate" and 32% define it as "limited." Whereas NGOs possess a large amount of information from project reports, activity reports, books, handbooks, surveys, brochures and information materials, this information is insufficiently organized and underused. However, there are positive examples of communication among CSOs, such as the activities of the Donor Forum organization, annual meetings of NGOs active on women issues and coalitions among various organisations in the Internet.

The low communication within civil society stems from competition for projects, lack of initiative and, to a certain extent, the underestimation of the importance of communications. CSOs do not allocate sufficient time or resources to communication related activities. Coordination among donor organisations is not sufficient, despite attempts to hold regular meetings and exchange information.

1.5.2 Co-operation between CSOs. Of the respondents, 43% believe there is "very little" cooperation in the civil society sector (RSC Survey 2004), however, respondents provided a total of 33 examples of good cooperation among CSOs. The most notable example of good cooperation is the joint effort of CSOs to amend the law regulating their activities, in the form of the Non-for-Profit Legal Entities Act.

Table III.1.5.2. reports the perceived importance of cooperation among NGOs and shows that, despite the rare occurrence in reality, a large majority of NGOs regard cooperation as crucially important to the effectiveness of their work. Cooperation with NGOs in neighbouring countries is seen as important by approximately half of the Bulgarian NGOs (49%), however, almost one-quarter (23%) do not have any cooperative contacts with NGOs in neighbouring countries.

Table III.1.5.2: Importance of cooperation among national NGOs

Cooperation is crucially important to the effectiveness of NGO work	70%
Co-operation is somehow important	20%
Co-operation with other NGOs is not important	9%

Source: NGO representatives: See www.rec.org/REC/publications/NGODirIntros/Bulgaria.html

1.6 Resources

The resources subdimension looks at the capacity of civil society in terms of the level of resources. It assesses the extent to which CSOs have adequate financial, human and technological resources to achieve their goals. The score for this subdimension is 1.1.

Table III.1.6: Indicators assessing civil society resources

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.6.1	Financial resources	0.5
1.6.2	Human resources	1.1
1.6.3	Technical and infrastructural resources	1.6

1.6.1 Financial Resource. To the question, "Are financial resources sufficient to meet goals?" the RSC Survey 2004 shows that answers are split between "insufficient" (45%) and "quite sufficient" (33%), indicating a moderately well-resourced sector.

The lack of sustainable financial resources is an obstacle to CSO autonomy, making organisations excessively dependent on the external donors. This brings in a sense of insecurity, and often acts as a de-motivator for staff, redirecting them to find work in other sectors and also leads to the adoption of market thinking in third-sector management.

Table III.1.6.1: Average % of resources received by NGOs from different sources

Type of Source	%
Foreign donors	58
State	6
Local business	5
Donations	7
Membership fees	11
Service fees	8
Others	5

Source: RSC Survey 2004

More than 80% of RSC Survey respondents state that their CSO receives almost no resources from the government. One type of CSO supported by the government is the chitalishta. The state budget also provides funding to certain quasi-NGOs, such as the Red Cross, the Bulgarian Tourist Union and the Union of Motorists. About 70% of CSOs did not receive any funding from the business community during the past financial year. For those that did receive funding from business last year, such funding was on average 10% of their total resources.

Funding from donations is also weak. In the past financial year, 65% of NGOs have not received any income from donations. About 11% of NGO resources come from membership dues, and 40% of the organisations

state that they have no income from membership dues. Income from services does not exceed 8% of total resources.

Despite the variety of sources of funding, there is a clear financial dependency within the sector on international donors. According to the PHARE survey of the NGO sector, 80% of NGO funding is provided by external donors (European Union 2004).

However, after 2007, the civil society sector will no longer be able to rely on considerable external funding. Since it is unlikely that it will gain substantial support from citizens, it will have to rely mainly on the state for its survival. Yet, at the present moment, the Bulgarian state is not making any effort to increase its financial support to civil society. The only exceptions are the stipulations of the Social Services Law in which NGOs are allowed to provide social services against state payment. The danger in an extensive reliance on the state is that the sector will no longer be non-governmental, nor civil, but a quasi-governmental extension of the state.

1.6.2 Human Resources. The RSC Survey 2004 shows that three-quarters of CSOs have salaried staff. About 45% of respondents believe that the skills of the organisation's team are sufficient versus 15% who find them insufficient. A lack of skills is particularly problematic for local CSOs.

1.6.3 Technical Resources. Of the CSO representatives surveyed, 90% find their technical resources to be fully sufficient, having sufficient equipment and adequate infrastructure. All surveyed organizations use the Internet.

Conclusion

Citizen participation in various forms of civic activities is rather low, signifying the strong legacy of the Communist Era. Consequently, Bulgarian CSOs lack a strong mass base in the population as well as support through the public.

As a contrast, one of the main strengths of civil society in Bulgaria is its rather well developed institutional structure. It was built mostly in the period from 1996 through 2000 with consistent and targeted donor support. As a result, in 2000 there were between 5,000 and 8,000 not-for-profit organisations registered in about 50 cities throughout Bulgaria. They embarked on a range of social, political and economic activities which previously had not been addressed, such as human rights awareness raising, assistance to underprivileged groups, regional economic development, educational and cultural issues, medical development and environmental protection. However, the result of the subdimension assessing civil society's level of organization (1.4) is not positive due to the limited number of umbrella bodies, their lack of effectiveness and the low share of Bulgarian CSOs with international linkages.

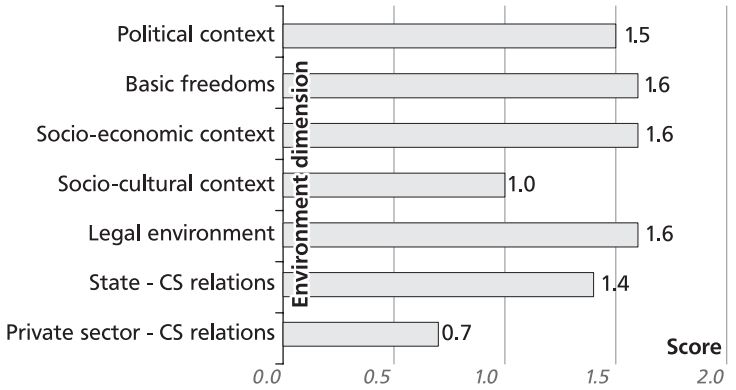
The relatively low score on the overall structure of Bulgarian civil society (1.1) was surprising for the NAG members. However, after initial discussions of the scores, the NAG was satisfied with the scores given to the individual indicators. It was pointed out that while there were strengths within civil society's structure, the weaknesses were more numerous and more severe. The score of 1.1 was supported by the participants of the National Conference, although there were some remarks stating that the scoring has been quite critical.

Due to the departure of many international donors as Bulgaria's EU accession in 2007 approaches, the sustainability of Bulgarian civil society is in question. It is therefore crucial that CSOs mobilize citizens to participate more widely and more deeply in CSOs which, in turn, will increase the credibility and ultimately the financial sustainability of the sector.

2. Environment

The environment dimension is divided into seven subdimensions, with a total of 23 indicators that assess how enabling the external environment is for civil society. It assesses political, constitutional, social, economic, cultural and legal factors, as well as the attitudes and behaviour of state and private sector actors towards civil society. Although not part of civil society itself, civil society's environment is nevertheless crucial in assessing civil society's status, as well as central to developing potential strengthening initiatives, since the environment might point towards root causes of specific problems. The score of the dimension is 1.3 which indicates that Bulgarian civil society exists in a moderately enabling environment.

Sub-dimension scores in environment dimension ***Figure III.2.1***



2.1 Political Context

The political context subdimension explores various aspects of the political situation in Bulgaria and its impact on civil society. The score of the subdimension is 1.5.

Table III.2.1 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.1: Indicators assessing political context

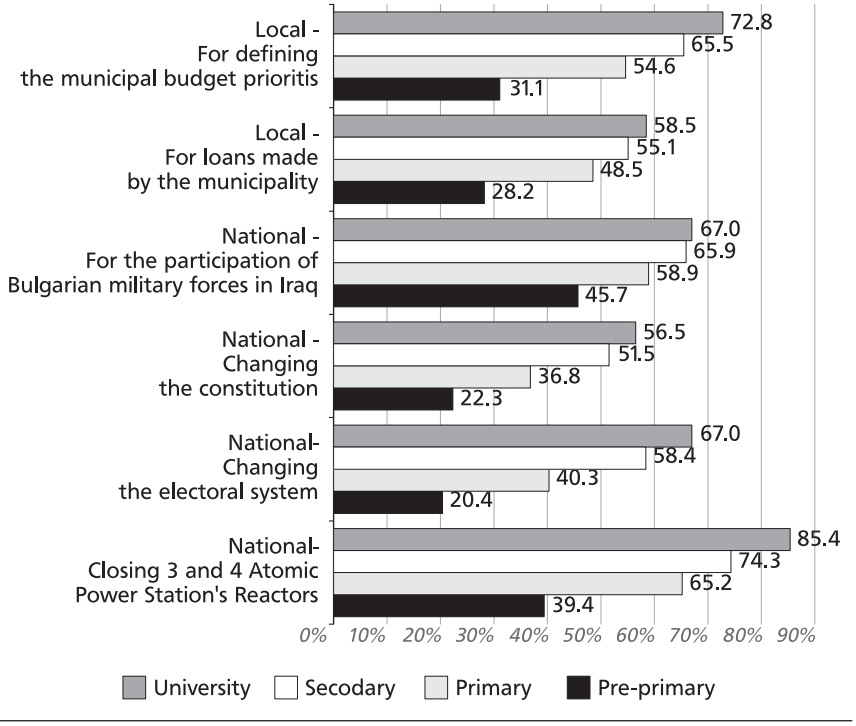
Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.1.1	Political Rights	2.6
2.1.2	Political competition	2.1
2.1.3	Rule of law	1.1
2.1.4	Corruption	0.9
2.1.5	State effectiveness	1.8
2.1.6	Decentralisation	0.7

2.1.1 Political Rights. Bulgaria has a good general legal framework for protecting the political rights of citizens. According to Freedom House reports for 2004 and 2003, Bulgaria is rated as most positive or 'free' when it comes to political rights.[14]

[14] On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the highest score.

Despite the presence of political rights and freedoms, a large proportion of citizens assess the current status of political life in Bulgaria rather negatively. The major reason for this negative assessment is low levels of confidence in the political class. As a result, the public is beginning to lose trust in the ability and will of the political system to reform itself. Therefore, as indicated in Figure III.2.1.1, citizen expectations for a radical change in the political system through the introduction of effective tools of direct democracy are emerging.

For which of the following referenda would you vote no matter whether the vote would be yes or no? ***Figure III.2.1.1***



There are a number of constraints concerning topics which can be addresses by a national or a local referendum (Mikhailov, Hristova, Negentsova 2003).The current Plebiscites Act poses high thresholds (most often 25% of voters) for initiation of referenda at the local level and does not allow for civil initiatives at the national level. Quorum levels for participation, which determine the legitimacy of a referendum, are also high, typically requiring 50% voter participation.

The introduction of majority elements into the election system, and the adoption of a comprehensive package of legislative measures, or an elections code, could improve the quality of representative democracy in Bulgaria. This, however, will not resolve the issue of the lack of confidence in the political class. It is necessary to introduce effective legislation for direct democracy, particularly at the local level.

2.1.2 Political Competition. Currently, there are 340 political parties registered in Bulgaria; however, many of these parties exist only on paper and do not perform any political function. The new Political Parties Act raises the threshold for registering a political party and aims at eliminating anonymous donations. Currently only four or five of the 340 parties have the potential to pass the 4% threshold for parliamentary representation.

The BCSS survey 2004 found that the majority of citizens (almost 60%) do not plan to vote for any party. However, this attitude should not necessarily be interpreted as low civil commitment. Non-participation can be a civil stance taking the form of passive protest. This is confirmed by the finding that even socially active

groups plan not to vote at national lections. Similarly, only about one-quarter of citizens believe that the political parties represent the interests of their constituencies. Half of the respondents think that public confidence in politics can substantially increase through a comprehensive change in the system towards direct democracy where the important decisions are made directly by the citizens. A lower percentage (45%) prefers reform as a way to achieve the same goal: by electing more individuals and rather than parties and by party leaderships taking into consideration the opinion of party members.

2.1.3 Rule of Law. There is an effective separation of powers in Bulgaria, making the judicial system independent and free from political interference. However, the specific system of the separation of powers has inherent deficiencies that hinder improvements in the judiciary. The most significant problems are the lack of transparency and accountability for members of the judiciary. To address these institutional imbalances, the Bulgarian Constitution was amended in 2003. The practical effects of this change have yet to be seen. Meanwhile, the judicial system in Bulgaria has contained to be inefficient, inconsistent and heavily criticized by the public (Freedom House 2004).

Therefore, confidence in the rule of law is low in Bulgaria, with 55% of citizens surveyed in the BCSS survey showing a low level of confidence in the judiciary. This is one of the lowest levels of confidence when compared to other institutions such as the police, the media, the Church and the president.

In its regular annual report on Bulgaria's progress in 2004 the European Commission strongly criticised the judicial system for its lack of efficiency in the struggle against corruption and crime. Bulgaria's EU accession agreement may include a special preventive clause related to the judicial system.

2.1.4 Corruption. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Bulgaria has shown improvement over the last years. Bulgaria was ranked in the CPI for the first time in 1998 scoring 2.9 points.[15] For the period from 1998 to 2002, the surveys showed a slow but steady increase in its value: 3.3 (1999), 3.5 (2000), 3.7 (2001) and 4.0 (2002). With this value Bulgaria ranks 45th, along with Poland and Brazil. For the first time, in 2004 there is a slight change in the tendency with Bulgaria's CPI dropping to 3.9 points, which ranks Bulgaria 54th, along with the Czech Republic and Brazil.

Unlike the business sector that perceives corruption as the most acute problem in Bulgaria, citizens rate corruption as the fifth most acute problem, preceded by unemployment, low incomes, poverty and crime. The positive change registered by this survey shows that Bulgarians become more optimistic about the fact that, after all, the fight against corruption is an achievable task (Coalition 2000, 2004).

2.1.5 State Effectiveness. Bulgaria has well-established and functioning government institutions in the three branches of government–the legislative, the executive and the judicial branch. There is political stability, sustainable macroeconomic growth and acceptable levels of social and health security for its citizens (European Commission 2004). Yet, despite the overall progress made by Bulgaria and its upcoming accession to the EU, the majority of respondents (64%) disagree with the statement that "the state is largely doing its job."[16] One of the reasons for this negative perception of government has to do with the lack of adequate communication and efforts to pursue open and accountable policies by the state.

2.1.6 Decentralization. Most changes in the local government in Bulgaria date back to 1991, when the new Constitution and the Law on Local Self-Government and Local Administration was adopted. The constitution divides the national territory of Bulgaria into municipalities and regions. The basic territorial and administrative

[15] On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the most negative and 10 the most positive.
[16] See. CSI Project, Representative Sociological Survey. 2004.

unit in the country is the municipality. Municipalities have the right to own property and maintain independent budgets. They also have the authority to address all issues of local importance including the management of public property, development policies, education, healthcare, culture, social aid, and environment protection. The local budgets are determined by the central government.

Municipal governments have two sources of revenues: central budget subsidies and taxes. Since the Constitution requires the National Assembly to approve all tax rates, local and property tax rates are defined by each municipality and then adopted en block by the parliament. Once the municipality receive their budget subsidies from the government they have complete control over their use. The only exception applies to money received from the central budget for the specific and targeted national programs.

There is now a process of decentralization of powers from the central government to the municipalities. A Decentralization Bill is currently being drafted. However, the process of decentralization does not ensure sufficient resources for local governments. The time for preparing municipal budgets is usually short, while the laws and regulations and instructions relating to the preparation of the draft budget are numerous and some are issued with a delay. For this reason, in some cases the public discussions of municipal budgets are only held formally.

There is a high level of public confidence in local authorities, which are undergoing democratization more dynamically than the central government (Mikhailov, et al. 2004). According to a survey conducted among the rural population, the institution of the mayor has almost twice the level of confidence than the one enjoyed by the EU and more than six times higher than that of the Government (5.6%). One reason for this disparity is that mayors are elected directly by the people, while regional governors are appointed by the Council of Ministers.

A gradual increase of municipal autonomy is necessary to appropriately take into account the large number of differences among the 264 Bulgarian municipalities and the need for supporting small and poor municipalities. What is particularly important is to introduce a regional link that can help reduce disparities among the municipalities (UNDP 2004).

2.2 Basic Rights and Freedoms

This sub-dimension looks at those constitutional rights which directly relate to the functioning of civil society, namely: basic civil liberties (freedoms of expression, assembly and association), information rights and freedoms of the press. It assesses to what extent these freedoms and rights are ensured by law and in practice. The subdimension score is 1.6.

Table III.2.2 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.2: Indicators assessing basic rights and freedoms

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.2.1	Civil liberties	2.0
2.2.2	Information rights	1.7
2.2.3	Press Freedom	1.0

2.2.1 Civil Liberties. The Constitution guarantees the freedom of association while prohibiting groups which threaten national unity or induce racial, national, ethnic or religious hate, which violate citizen rights or try to achieve their goals through violent means.

According to Freedom House's Freedom of the World Report 2003, Bulgaria's civil liberties rating improved from three to two due to continued efforts to bring the country's political, economic and social environments in line with European standards, as well as due to improved tolerance towards ethnic minorities and increased openness towards non-traditional religious groups.

Figure III.2.2.1: Freedom House Civil Liberties Rating for Bulgaria (Score, Status)

2000	2001	2002	2003
2,F	2,F	3,F	2,F

2.2.2 Information Rights. Bulgaria adopted an Access to Public Information Act in 1999 which grants every Bulgarian citizen, and all legal entities, the right to access public information. An increasing number of journalists are referring to that Act when searching for information.

2.2.3 Press Freedom. The changes in Bulgarian society over the past 13 years are particularly evident in the field of the media. Following the collapse of totalitarian rule in 1989, the Bulgarian media acquired a new image. It was in media, both print and electronic, that the market economy made its first entry into the Bulgarian economy.

With the exception of party-run newspapers and publications that defend the economic interest of their owners, newspapers in Bulgaria are mainly independent. However, it is a fact that many Bulgarian media outlets have biases that often override professional journalistic concerns. The government has also tried to use its power to grant broadcast licenses as a lure to influence the electronic media, but its efforts have produced few results.

Freedom House ranks press freedom by "the degree to which each country permits the free flow of information," on a scale of 1 (not free) to 100 (fully free). Freedom House (2004) awarded Bulgaria a score of 35, which indicates a partially free press. This low score is mainly due to government efforts to influence both state and private media. A similar assessment is given by Bulgarian citizens. About half of them fully agree with the statement that "the media are free," while 23 % fully disagree and 28% neither agree nor disagree (BCSS survey 2004).

The most characteristic feature of the Bulgarian print media is the dynamic changes within them. New publications keep emerging on the market, while others disappear. It is not possible to establish the exact number of publications coming out at present, since there is no press law in Bulgaria and the procedure of publishing papers is fully liberalised. Currently, there are 11 national dailies and three national weeklies. During recent years, regional and local newspapers have flourished, even though their situation is not stable. This is because the limited advertising market creates huge obstacles for the financial survival of these regional and local papers. Most regional and local newspapers are published twice or three times a week or weekly, except about 20 regional papers, which are issued daily in the larger regional centres (Tabakova 2002).

2.3 Socio-Economic Context

The socio-economic context subdimension assesses the socio-economic situation in Bulgaria and its impact on civil society. The socio-economic context subdimension score is 1.6.

Table III.2.3: Indicator assessing socio-economic context

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.3.1	Socio-economic context	1.6

To operationalise the concept of 'socio-economic environment' the CSI uses eight criteria which represent different means through which the socio-economic context can potentially impact civil society: 1) Poverty; 2) Civil war; 3) Severe ethnic or religious conflict; 4) Severe economic crisis; 5) Severe social crisis; 6) Serious socio-economic inequities; 7) Illiteracy and 8) Lack of IT infrastructure. For each of these criteria a specific benchmark was set to indicate that the respective criterion presents a socio-economic barrier to civil society. The benchmarks and data for these eight criteria for Bulgaria are:

1. *Widespread poverty-do more than 40% of Bulgarians live on less than 2 US$ a day?* No. The proportion of extremely poor people in Bulgaria in 2001 is estimated to range between 2.3% and 7.9%, according to National Statistical Institute Data and World Bank data respectively (UNDP 2003). According to World Bank data for 2002, the population below the national poverty line is 12.8%. While living standards have improved steadily over the past few years, the positive impact of reforms has not reached all population groups, and pockets of poverty persist.
2. *Civil war-did the country experience any armed conflict during the last five years?* No. No armed conflict took place during the last five years.
3. *Severe ethnic or religious conflict? – No.* Bulgaria did not experience severe ethnic or religious conflict.
4. *Severe economic crisis – is the external debt more than the GDP?* No. For 2004, the public debt represents 41.9% of GDP (CIA 2004).
5. *Severe social crisis?* No. In the last two years Bulgaria has not experienced any serious social crisis.
6. *Severe socio-economic inequities? (i.e. is the Gini-coefficient > 0.4?) No.* According to the World Bank 2004 World Development indicator, Bulgaria's Gini-Coefficient is 0.31.
7. *Pervasive illiteracy - are more than 40% of the adult population illiterate?* No. The illiteracy rate for the adult population in 2002 was 98 500 or 1.29 %. There has been limited progress in efforts to improve the efficiency and quality of the educational system. The share of illiterate people remains high, despite the implementation of various programmes to overcome illiteracy which have primarily focused on the Roma population. There have been particular difficulties with older citizens. Efforts to work with school drop-outs among Roma children and children from poor families continue.
8. *Lack of IT infrastructure – are there less than 5 IT hosts per 10.000 inhabitants?* No. According to the International Telecommunications Union, Bulgaria has an acceptable IT infrastructure, with 66.57 hosts per 10,000 inhabitants. It also enjoys relatively widespread computers in households, 5.19 per 100 households. As of October 2004, internet use in Bulgaria reached 23% among the population of legal age. These numbers are comparable to the share of internet users in Hungary (22%), Romania (23%) and Poland (27%). Among Eastern European countries, considerably higher numbers of users are registered by the Czech Republic (56%), Slovenia (59%) and Estonia (61%), while among Bulgaria's neighbouring countries, Turkey, Greece and Macedonia, internet penetration ranges between 10% and 15%.[17]

Bulgaria has experienced macroeconomic stability and strong growth since the major economic downturn in 1996 led to the fall of the then socialist government. As a result, the government became committed to economic reform and responsible fiscal planning. In 1997, macroeconomic stability was reinforced by the imposition of a fixed exchange rate of the leva against the German D-mark and the negotiation of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) standby agreement. Low inflation and steady progress on structural reforms improved the business environment; Bulgaria has averaged 4% growth since 2000 and has begun to attract significant amounts of foreign direct investment.

Still, in order to maintain stability, the government must overcome high rates of poverty and unemployment

[17] Data about Bulgaria is quoted from studies conducted by Alpha Research in 2000–2004. The studies are representative of the population, of legal age. Data about the other countries are quoted from eEurope+ (a study of EU candidate countries conducted with the support of the European Commission), Nielsen//NetRatings, KRNIC.

which represent a certain threat for social development in Bulgaria. Although the socio-economic situation is steadily improving, the NAG gave this indicator a medium score of 1.6 because of poverty, and unemployment.

2.4 Socio-Cultural Context

Although civic norms, such as confidence, are often viewed as key components of social capital, (Putnam 1993) and occasionally also as an element of civil society (Bratton 1994:2), the CSI examines these norms as an important *social resource* that civil society can benefit from, as a part of the external environment of civil society. This subdimension examines to what extent socio-cultural norms and attitudes are conducive, or detrimental, to civil society.

The socio-cultural subdimension score is 1.0.

Table III.2.4: Indicators assessing socio-cultural context

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.4.1	Trust	1.0
2.4.2	Tolerance	1.4
2.4.3	Public spiritedness	0.7

2.4.1 Trust. Bulgarian citizens do not typically trust other citizens. As many as 74% of citizens chose the statement, "one should be careful when dealing with most people," rather than, "most people can be trusted" (17%) (BCSS survey 2004). Bulgarians report, in large numbers, that they were cheated in the recent past, that people should keep their word "only to those who deserve it" and that they trust only their own kin.

2.4.2 *Tolerance*. According to the BCSS survey 2004, Bulgarian citizens exhibit a rather high level of intolerance towards minorities and stigmatized social groups. The highest level of intolerance is expressed towards drug addicts, the Roma population, ex-prisoners, homosexuals and those infected with AIDS (Table III. 2.4.2).

Table III. 2.4.2 Which of the following groups of people you would not like to have as neighbours?

I would not like as a neighbour	%
Drug addicts	78.1
Roma	64.5
Ex-prisoners	64.3
Homosexual	59.5
AIDS – infected	53.7
Immigrants in Bulgaria	32.4
People from different race	28.5
Ethnic Turks	28.1
People with different religion	24.8
Divorced	11.4
Extremely poor people	10.7
Bulgarians	1.4

The social integration of Roma remains a major challenge in Bulgaria (Global Review of Ethnic Policy 2004). Numerous studies indicate a lack of visible progress in this area, despite the efforts of many governments and international donor organisations (Beyond the Trap of Dependence, 2003). The Roma problem in Bulgaria is a

result of intertwined ethnic, cultural, economic and psychological factors, as well as poorly conceptualised strategies underlying donor and governance policies.

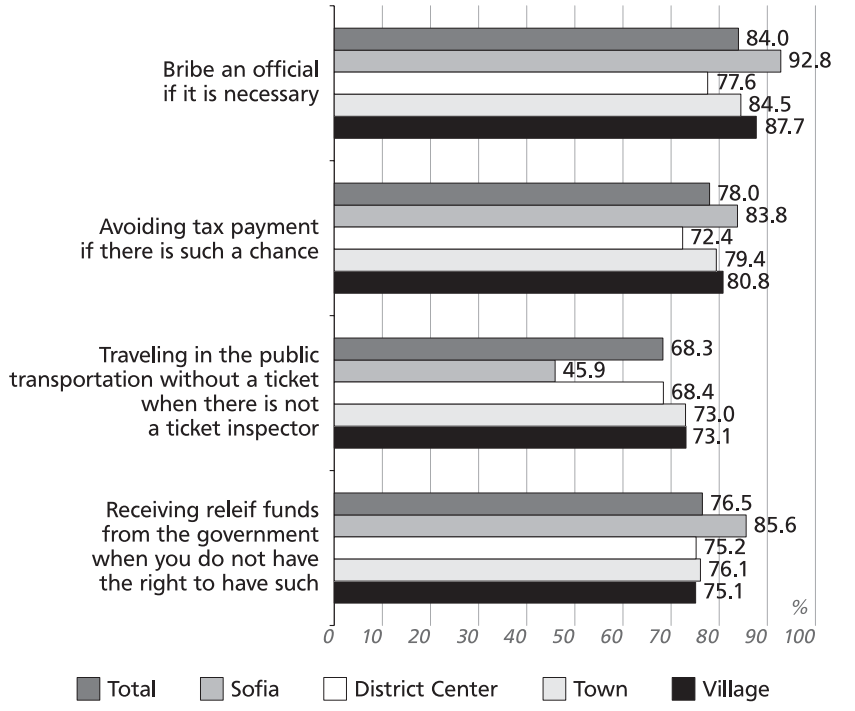
Part of the challenge stem from the excessive focus of support on the ethnic specificity of this problem. Various NGO representatives stated during the regional stakeholder consultations, that the approach to vulnerable groups does not need to take the form of positive discrimination, such as the special focus on the Roma population who are treated as if they were different. This is a source of tension in Bulgarian society and at the core of the intolerant attitude towards Roma people.

2.4.3 Public Spiritedness. The indicator assesses the sense of public spiritedness among members of society. To assess this, the BCSS survey asked respondents where they would approve a number of actions, which can be regarded as harming the public, such as bribing a public official.

The majority of respondents do not approve of citizens cheating with financial institutions and do not tolerate participation in corrupt practices (Figure III.2.4.3). The most inadmissible action is bribing an official, and the most allowable, though still unacceptable to more than two-thirds of respondents, is travelling without a ticket on public transport. However, despite the high percentage of disapproval, the NAG awarded the low score of 0.7 to express their doubts regarding the coherence between citizen's attitudes and behaviour. The low score is further supported by the rather low score awarded to the indicator on corruption.

How often would you approve of the following actions?*

Figure III.2.4.3



** Graph represents % of respondents answering "Never."*

2.5 Legal Environment

This subdimension examines the extent to which the legal environment is enabling or disabling to civil society. The score for the legal environment subdimension is a moderate 1.6.

Table III.2.5: Indicators assessing legal environment

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.5.1	CSO registration	2.0
2.5.2	Allowable Advocacy Activities	2.2
2.5.3	Tax laws favourable to CSOs	1.1
2.5.4	Tax benefits for philanthropy	1.0

2.5.1 CSO Registration. CSO registration is carried out in accordance with the Not-for-Profit Legal Entities Act (NFPLEA), which entered into force in 2001 and provides a clear framework for state intervention in the sector. The legal environment has been completed with the introduction of the concept of public interest organisations (PIO). The registration process under NFPLEA is relatively simple, as far as registration with the courts is concerned, even though unjustified obstacles are often observed, especially in terms of the time required to register.

Overall, CSO representatives' assessments of the CSO registration process mirror the legal analysis. 60% of RSC Survey respondents consider the CSO registration procedures to be quick; 68% regard the procedures as inexpensive, 56% as simple and 76% assess that the procedures are consistently applied without any privileges or discriminations.

The registration as a Not-for-Profit Public Interest Legal Entity (NFPLE) is significantly more complex. Registration is a bureaucratic process, and the special rights of NFPLE's are few in number and unclear. The registration itself costs about BGN 200 (about $133 USD).

2.5.2 Allowable Advocacy Activities. 34% of regional stakeholders consider that the state uses reasonable restrictions for CSO advocacy initiatives, and another 30% consider that there are not any restrictions at all (Table III. 2.5.2).

Table III.2.5.2: In your assessment, does the existing legislation give any limitations to CSO advocacy initiatives?

Answers	%
Unreasonable limitations	16
Reasonable limitations	34
No limitations	30
Don't know	20

However, the existing legislation is still not well known by citizens and their organisations. There still are a number of unclear provisions, gaps and inconsistencies in the legislation. As a consequence, although allowable, advocacy initiatives are very rare.

2.5.3 Tax Laws favourable to CSOs. Not-for-profit legal entities registered in the public interest enjoy some preferences with regard to the taxation of donations, as per the amendments to the Local Taxes and Fees Act. Donations given and received by NFPLE, are recorded in the Central NFPLE Registry, and which carry out public interest activities, are exempted from taxation. No VAT is payable for imported goods, if they are imported as a free-of-charge assistance by an NFPLE recorded in the Central NFPLE Registry.

2.5.4 Tax Benefits for Philanthropy. As specified in the Corporate Revenue Taxation Act, certain tax benefits have been granted to NGO donors. Regarding donations to NFPLEs, the taxable financial outcome is reduced by up to 10% of the amount of donations. Where a donation has been reported as an expense by a donating commercial company, the company needs to pay a once-off tax on the donation, amounting to 15% thereof, if

the donation is made to the benefit of a NFPLE. Amendments to the Individual Income Taxation Act, adopted on 26 November 2004, envisage that taxable income be reduced by 50% of the amount of donations to the Sick Children Treatment Fund.

2.6 State-Civil Society Relations

This subdimension describes and assesses the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the Bulgarian state. The state-civil society relations subdimension score is 1.4.

Table III.2.6: Indicators assessing state-civil society relations

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.6.1	Autonomy	2.0
2.6.2	Dialogue	1.3
2.6.3	Cooperation/ support	1.0

2.6.1 Autonomy. Bulgarian civil society functions rather autonomously from the state. As shown in Table III.2.6.1, according to two-thirds of civil society stakeholders, the state interferes only rarely or sometimes with civil society activities.

Table III.2.6.1: According to you, how often does the state interfere in CS activities?

Answers	%
Never	4
Rarely	24
Sometimes	51
Frequently	15
I do not know	56

Source: RSC Survey 2004

Whereas no examples of undue interference in NGO activities by the state could be identified, most stakeholders shared the opinion that the state neglects the activities of the third sector.

2.6.2 Dialogue. The results of the RSC Survey 2004 show that most respondents (60%) consider the dialogue between civil society and the state to be limited. At the central government level, the state typically only communicates with the so-called social partners (trade unions and employers) on labour issues.

Additionally, the state has institutionalised relations with only a handful of other CSOs operating at the national level, such as, the National Rehabilitation and Social Integration Council, the Welfare Assistance Board, the National Child Protection Council, and the National Board on Ethnic and Demographic Issues, which aim at involving NGOs in the preparatory stages of the legislative process.

Relations between local authorities and NGOs are further developed. Local authorities, however, work with a limited number of NGOs, without soliciting participation from a wide range of citizens. This is also due to the limited NGO capacities, especially in smaller municipalities (Mihajlov 2004). Clear rules of engagement as well as more openness and a better dialogue, both from government toward NGOs and from NGOs to ordinary citizens, are required. Mandatory public discussions of municipal budgets are a good step in this direction (UNDP 2004).

2.6.3 Cooperation/Support. Cooperation between civil society and government is best developed in the form of joint

projects, mainly run at the municipal level. In small municipalities, especially in rural areas, CSOs have only limited experience with projects. About 48% of CSOs in rural municipalities do not implement any projects (UNDP 2004).

Despite resource constraints, municipalities often provide premises and other resources for the implementation of various civic initiatives or for the supply of services to citizens. Stakeholders take part in planning processes at the municipal level. For example, 71% of stakeholders in rural areas stated that they were aware of municipal development plan priorities, but conversely more than 70% of citizens in the same municipalities responded that municipal authorities had failed to inform them what municipalities plan to do.

At the regional and central levels, CSO participation in projects and in the planning process is extremely limited (UNDP 2004). These partnerships are mainly developed around 'opportune' goals and objectives to receive financial resources from international or public funds. This type of 'project' partnership has a positive impact on the development of CSOs' institutional capacities, but reduces the potential of civil society to have a long-term influence on sustainable local development. Such projects usually only have temporary effects in the respective region since after the end of the project a new location is being selected. The key to achieving sustainable local development, however, is the expansion of partnerships through involving a wide range of citizens as well as business organisations.

In the delegation of services to be provided by NGOs, the government should apply the principle of equal treatment, without providing preferences for certain CSOs. There are organisations, such as the Bulgarian Red Cross and the Chitalishta, which are given preferential treatment by laws regulating funding and donations.

With regards to financial support, the government does not currently play an important role. According to RSC Survey 2004 only 20% of CSOs receive substantive resources from the government to implement projects. Thus, particularly in light of the pending departure of many international donors, there is a strong need for a diversification of CSOs' funding sources and for the establishment of national, regional and municipal funds to provide (co-)funding for welfare and civic initiatives.

2.7 Private Sector-Civil Society Relations

This subdimension describes and assesses the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the private sector. It was awarded a rather low score of 0.7.

Table III.2.7 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.7: Indicators assessing private sector–civil society relations

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.7.1	Private sector attitude to Civil Society	0.7
2.7.2	Corporate social responsibility	1.0
2.7.3	Corporate philanthropy	0.5

In the view of stakeholders, the private sector in Bulgaria does not care much about civil society. Regional stakeholders assess the attitude of the private sector towards civil society as mainly as indifferent (57%) with a substantive minority describing it as positive (32%) (RSC Survey).

2.7.1 Private Sector Attitude. At the national level business partnerships with CSOs are limited The RSC Survey 2004 found that a majority of respondents regarded the private sector has having an indifferent attitude towards civil society. However, almost another third of respondents assess it as positive.

The few examples include the UNDP 'Global Contract' Programme and the 'Love Bridge 2004 initiative.[18] There are also some projects by the Charity Assistance in Bulgaria' Foundation. Attempts have been made to set up associations between NGOs and large businesses. For example the focus of the Global Bulgaria Association is the participation of the CSO sector in the assimilation of EU Structural Funds after 2007.

2.7.2 Corporate Social Responsibility. According to a survey conducted among large international companies active in Bulgaria, most of them are active in a diverse number of civic and charity programmes at the local level[19]. McDonald's, for example, supports educational programmes and institutions in a number of ways. It develops and co-finances various projects, raises funds for schools and provides scholarships and education enhancements for its staff. Similarly to MacDonald's, the Coca-Cola Company sponsors various art and educational programmes, and invests in promoting the activities of women's and ethnic organizations. Yet, there is a prevailing opinion that most companies do not make any significant effort to mitigate the impact of their operations on the environment.[20]

In the RSC Survey, answers to the question, "How would you describe the efforts of large Bulgarian corporations directed towards overcoming the social and ecological consequences of their work?" were: insignificant – 31%, limited– 40%, moderate–18% and considerable–3%, indicating a rather modest scope of corporate social responsibility in Bulgaria.

2.7.3 Corporate Philanthropy. CSOs receive funding from private business in extremely rare cases, such as, when undertaking a significant and broadly promoted campaign, and when serious benefits to the funding organization are expected. With regards to large Bulgarian enterprises, the data about funding for CSOs, civic actions, charity or sponsorship are scarce and inaccurate.

The most frequent forms of corporate philanthropy in Bulgaria are donations for child welfare institutions, homes for people with disabilities and other similar institutions. The bulk of donations are given on significant national holidays, such as for New Years celebrations. Once-off donations, reduced prices for goods and services, in-kind assistance, such as, equipment, clothing, materials or company products that are offered to orphan or welfare institutions are the most frequent forms of donations Usually these are not based on strategic approaches or elaborate corporate policies.

However, at the municipal level there are relatively frequent instances (in about 40% of the cases in rural areas) of businesses providing funding to NGOs.

There is untapped potential for the co-funding of civil initiatives by local businesses. Sustainable mechanisms for public-private partnerships are needed, such as 'complementary funds', where NGOs, local businesses and the municipalities could partner with each other.

Conclusion

The two most negative factors of civil society's environment are unsupportive socio-cultural norms. They are the absence of social capital and an indifferent private sector. However, the CSI study found that political, legal and socio-economic context factors are also only moderately supportive to the development of civil society. Here, the medium scores do not always reflect a lack of a positive environment, but also the lack of knowledge and use of existing positive context factors, such as, laws, regulations and incentives.

[18] http://www.undp.bg/bg/gc_newsletter_july2004.php

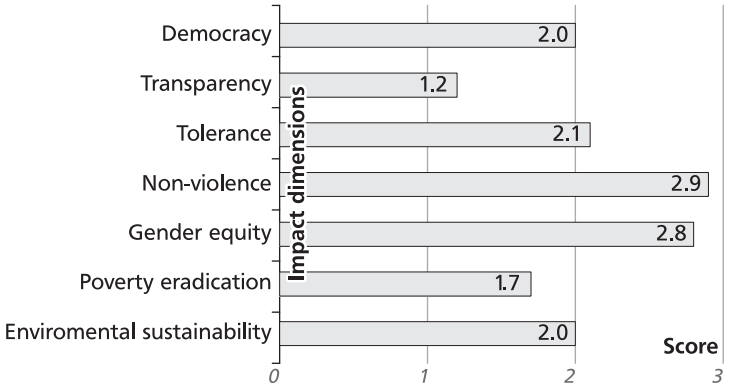
[19] Data from a survey on the Corporate social responsibility implemented by Slavina Dimitrova in January, 2005 (materials published on the web-sites of the mentioned companies have been used).

[20] Ibid.

3. Values

The values dimension examines the principles and values practiced and promoted by civil society. The CSI regards the balance between tolerant versus intolerant forces, progressive versus fundamentalist CSOs or those organisations contributing to poverty versus those fighting poverty in a country is important in determining civil society's values. The score for this dimension is 2.1, which reflects an overall positive value basis for Bulgarian civil society. Only the low score for the transparency subdimension stands out as a problematic area. Figure III.3.1 presents the scores for the seven subdimensions within the values dimension.

Subdimension scores in values dimension ***Figure III.3.1***



3.1 Democracy

This subdimension assesses to what extent civil society organisations practice and promote democracy; it scores 2.0. Table III.3.1 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

Table III.3.1: Indicators assessing democracy

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.1.1	Democratic practices within CSOs	2.4
3.1.2	Civil society actions to promote democracy	1.6

3.1.1 Democratic Practices within CSOs. CIVICUS proposed to assess internal democracy in CSOs through examining the type of leadership elections within CSOs, and the extent to which members influence decision-making processes. According to the majority of NGO representatives (RSC Survey 2004) there are almost no leaders who are self-elected or appointed 'from above' or outside the organisation. In 60% of cases the management was elected by the General Assembly or members and in an additional 30% of cases, CSOs elected their management team by the Management Board. . Decision-making within CSOs is also regarded as democratic and members are seen as having either 'moderate' or 'significant' influence over this process.

3.1.2 Civil *Society Actions to Promote Democracy*. The objectives of most CSOs in Bulgaria are associated with the provision of services, and a very small number of those are involved in lobbying, advocacy, or developing and working for the adoption of policies through campaigning and public events.

Accordingly, a full third of stakeholders could not give any example of specific actions taken by civil society to promote democracy. About 24% define the role of the civil society in democratic development as limited,

and another 32% as moderate (RSC Survey 2004).

A total of 35 examples of civil society actions to promote democracy were given by regional stakeholders (RSC Survey 2004). Among them, there were different types of campaigns, voting initiatives, environmental projects, as well as, many of the activities of organizations such as: Partners- Bulgaria; the Foundations for Local Government Reform; Balkan Assist Association; Coalition 2000; the Bulgarian Media Coalition; DemNet Program and Civil Society Development Program.

Once-off acts dominate CSO activities in the area of democracy promotion. There are only a small number of organisations whose mission is focused on the development of democracy in Bulgaria. They are active in the area of democracy development, human rights and citizen participation, work to raise public awareness in most general terms, such as the Access to Information Foundation.

More frequently, CSO actions to promote democracy take the form of seminars, assessments and conferences, which do not aim to support civic initiatives, but rather to influence the policy environment. To some extent, this makes CSOs look 'elitist' in the eyes of ordinary citizens who expect a tangible outcome and not an indirect and secondary effect sometimes in the future.

Most often NGO campaigns target public opinion-makers, such as government and the media (e.g. You choose) and campaigns against domestic violence. Referendums and civic forums directly targeting citizens are rare.[21]

3.2 Transparency

The transparency subdimension looks at corruption and financial transparency within civil society, as well as civil society actions to promote transparency at a societal level. It scores 1.2, which is by far the lowest score within the values dimension.

Table III.3.2: Indicators assessing transparency

Ref #	Indicators	Score
3.2.1	Corruption within civil society	1.7
3.2.2	Financial Transparency of CSO	1.3
3.2.3	CS actions to promote transparency	0.6

3.2.1 Corruption within Civil Society. Corruption is seen as a rather widespread phenomenon within civil society. More than half of the CSO representatives believe that incidences of corrupt behaviour in civil society are a frequent (35%) or very frequent (18%) phenomenon (RSC Survey 2004).

Consequently, one of the weaknesses of Bulgarian civil society most frequently pointed out during the regional stakeholder consultations was the extent of corruption within the sector. At the same time, this was a topic which provoked opposing statements, such as "yes, there is corruption within the sector" and "if we look at the larger perspective, that is corruption within the country, then the corruption in the sector is insignificant."

However, as corrupt practices can be found within civil society, which is expected to take the lead in combating this phenomenon, stakeholders had doubts as to the very foundation of CSOs as guardians and promoters of society's values.

[21] See. www.balkanassist.bg.

Besides the adoption of a control system by donors, public control mechanisms with respect to the civil society sector should also be introduced. This could include higher transparency in project applications, in motivating the selection of a given project and in project implementation and publications in media and on the internet.

3.2.2 Financial Transparency of CSOs. Two-thirds of CSO representatives believe that accounting procedures are transparent for the members of their organization (RSC Survey 2004). The financial information is provided to the organization teams and their boards of directors. Organizations registered under the Non-for-profit Legal Entities Act are under the obligation to publish annual financial statements for their activity. Irrespective of the obligation financial statements are rarely made available to the broader public.

3.2.3 Civil Society Actions to Promote Transparency. Civil society's actions to promote transparency are seen as rather insignificant. Almost two-thirds of the respondents in the RSC Survey 2004 claim that civil society plays either a limited or moderate role in promoting transparency in Bulgarian society. Most respondents could not identify any examples of civil society projects, programs or campaigns to promote transparency in the private sector. The few examples of projects and organizations attempting to increase transparency include: the Coalition 2000 and Anti-Corruption and Open Society Institute's projects.

3.3 Tolerance

The tolerance subdimension looks at the balance between tolerant and intolerant forces within civil society, as well as the extent to which civil society is engaged in promoting tolerance within Bulgarian society at large. The score for this subdimension is 2.1.

Table III.3.3: Indicators assessing tolerance

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.3.1	Tolerance within the civil society arena	2.1
3.3.2	Civil society activities to promote tolerance	2.0

3.3.1 Tolerance within the Civil Society Arena. Bulgarian civil society is characterised by a rather high level of tolerance. Over 90 % of respondents to the RSC Survey 2004 define relations within the sector as tolerant, and there are no examples of intolerant behaviour among CSOs. On the contrary, the most frequently reported issue in the media review was related to examples of tolerance within the civil society arena.

3.3.2 Civil Society Activities to Promote Tolerance. Civil Society stakeholders are divided in their assessment on civil society's role to promote tolerance in wider society. Roughly a third of respondents regards this role as either limited, moderate or significant (RSC Survey 2004). However, most respondents were able to provide specific examples of public campaigns to promote tolerance. They often relate to target groups, such as people with disabilities, children in a disadvantaged social position, as well as the Anti-AIDS campaigns.

It is interesting to see that there are only few examples of promoting tolerance towards the Roma people, despite the importance of this issue and the large number of projects in this area. Some of examples of these projects are: "We are all equal, we are all different" project, and the Different Ethnic Festival which are often covered by the media in Bulgaria.

3.4 Non-Violence

The non-violence subdimension describes and assesses the extent to which Bulgarian civil society actors and organization practice and promote non-violence. This subdimension scores a very high 2.9.

Table III.3.4: Indicators assessing non-violence

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.4.1	Non-violence within the CS arena	2.9
3.4.2	CS actions to promote non-violence	2.8

3.4.1 Non-Violence within the Civil Society Arena. The CSI research did not reveal any examples or data concerning acts of violence among CSOs. On the contrary, civil society in Bulgaria is marked by extremely tolerant relations. According to data from the media review, non-violence in the CSO arena is one of the indicators receiving the most coverage. Indeed, the image of civil society in the media is mostly positive, with a strong focus on cooperation among CSOs and non-violent and tolerant relations among them.

3.4.2 Civil Society Actions to Promote Non-Violence. Similar to the assessment of tolerance, civil society stakeholders do not agree in their assessment on civil society's role in promoting non-violence in Bulgaria. Respondents are divided in approximately equal shares between 'limited', 'moderate' and 'significant' (RSC Survey 2004). A diverse number of examples were provided by stakeholders, with the following campaigns being indicated most frequently: 'No Violence', 'Women and Children Victims of Violence' (Animus) and human rights protection campaigns.

3.5 Gender equality

The gender equality subdimension assesses gender equitable practices within Bulgarian civil society as well as civil society actions to promote gender equity at the societal level. The score for this subdimension is 2.8.

Table III.3.5: Indicators assessing gender equality

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.5.1	Gender equity within the CS arena	3.0
3.5.2	Gender equitable practices within CSOs	2.9
3.5.3	CS actions to promote gender equity	2.4

3.5.1 Gender Equity within the CS Arena. The regional stakeholder consultations held under the CSI project indicate that the civil society sector is very aware of gender equity. Most participants in the meetings take this as a specific strength of civil society, although there were some concerns. According to the NGO representatives, the sector is dominated by women.

3.5.2 Gender Equitable Practices within CSOs. Approximately three-quarters of civil society stakeholders (RSC Survey 2004) state that their organisation has a gender equality policy, with equal levels of pay for both men and women. Usually these policies are not put on paper but are nevertheless respected.

3.5.3 CSO Actions to Promote Gender Equity. Civil society is also seen as playing an important role in promoting gender equity with close to two-thirds of respondents seeing either a moderate or a significant role. The same percentage of stakeholders knew of at least one example of civil society programs and campaigns promoting gender equity (Table III 3.5.1).

Table III. 3.5.1: Are there any examples (for the last year) of CS public campaigns, activities or programs promoting gender equity?

Answers	%
No	12
One or two examples	30
A few examples	20
Lots of examples	16
I do not know	22

Source: RSC Survey 2004

The most outstanding examples are the following campaigns: 'More Women in Government' of the Women Alliance for Development (WAD) and the activities of the Gender Foundation.

Stakeholders were unanimous in their assessment that in this area civic organisations have a significant impact. They actively contribute to the drafting of the 'Anti-Discrimination Act', as well as of the 'Urgent Measures against Domestic Violence Act'. Currently, owing to external funding, there are several well-functioning centres for support to women victims of violence, in Sofia, Pleven, Gabrovo, and other cities.

CSOs dealing with women's issues make use of 'civic instruments' (e.g. organizing events, mobilizing people, providing training courses etc.), but few are involved in influencing policy and decision-making. A gap in gender policy is the lack of government programmes to provide support and assistance to female victims of violence in order to allow them to return to their normal lives.

3.6 Poverty Eradication

The poverty eradication subdimension examines the extent to which civil society actors are engaged in addressing poverty issues and promoting pro-poor policies. The score of the subdimension is a moderate 1.7.

Table III.3.6: Indicator assessing poverty eradication

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.6.1	CS actions to eradicate poverty	1.7

3.6.1 Poverty Eradication. Civil society's work on poverty eradication receives a mixed rating. Stakeholders were able to provide many specific examples or indicate campaigns, as well as names of organisations, whose activities are aimed at different disadvantaged groups, such as children at risk, women victims and ethnic minorities, as well as programmes and projects working on priorities, such as poverty eradication, and through making arrangements to provide employment, generate income through charitable initiatives. However, only one-quarter of them define the activities of CSOs in fighting poverty as significant (RSC Survey 2004).

CSOs in the field of welfare constitute the largest sub-sector within civil society (BCSS survey, 2004). Their effectiveness and public support, however, are disputable. By filling in the gaps and providing services that should be offered by the state, they are seen more as partners of the state rather than of the citizens – that was mentioned more than once at the regional stakeholder consultations and at the National CSI Conference. Also, as they often tend to follow donor priorities, they do not respond to the actual needs of the population.

Many CSOs in Bulgaria remedy deficient welfare service provision by the state by offering work - that shops and training to public officials to improve their capacity. In this sense CSOs fulfil a support function in relation to the

state, rather than directly meeting the needs of the citizens. This partly explains the low levels of public trust in these NGOs (BCSS survey 2004).

3.7 Environmental Sustainability

The environmental sustainability subdimension assesses the extent to which civil society is actively engaged in promoting environmental sustainability. The score for this subdimension is 2.0.

Table III.3.7: Indicator assessing environmental sustainability

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.7.1	CS actions to sustain the environment	2.0

3.7.1 Civil Society Actions to Sustain Environment. The role of civil society in environmental protection is regarded as significant by stakeholders (RSC Survey 2004). Only 22% of respondents define it as limited and just 11% are unable to give specific examples of projects in the field of the environment. In contrast to other CSO subtypes, environmental organisations have a strong public profile and well developed professional capacities. In comparison to other CSOs they operate more often in networks, coordinate their initiatives and maintain international contacts. They are well represented at the regional level, especially in the regions of Pleven, Stara Zagora and Kardzhali. However, there are no examples of mass environmental campaigns in the form of environmental protests or nationwide advocacy campaigns.

Environmental activities are of insignificant public interest. On a small scale, events are initiated among youths and small neighbourhood groups for cleaning or planting trees. Books and materials are issued by NGOs about recycling and water resources. However, most Bulgarians still favour economic interests over environmental ones. For example, there is predominant public support for the development of nuclear power. About 67% of the citizens voted at a referendum in favour of keeping units 3 and 4 of the Kozloduj Nuclear Power Plant, even if this might threaten the adoption of Bulgaria to the EU. Bulgarian citizens believe they will be paying higher electricity bills if small and outdated nuclear reactors are decommissioned. Environmental NGOs fail to provide convincing information and examples to prove the opposite and build a broader awareness of environmental issues.

The main reason is that NGOs and their donors underestimate the interrelatedness of economic prosperity and a protected environment. Although well trained and active, environmental NGOs have not been able to match the strong impact of their colleagues in some other European countries. The Bulgarian people still suffer from too many social and economic problems to be able to pay enough attention to sustainable development. Only recently the need to develop environmental tourism and the potential for income generation through the sustainable use of natural resources is being promoted in Bulgaria.

Conclusion

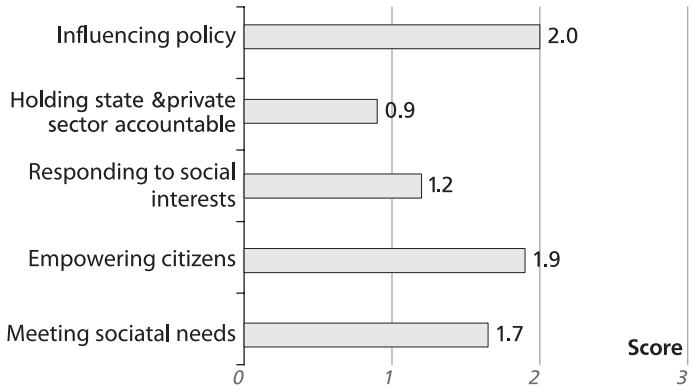
As a whole, even 'from above' and without strong citizen participation, CSOs manage to build a certain civic culture in Bulgaria. More often indirectly, namely through their presence in the media, rather than directly through the outcomes of their projects, CSOs contribute to the promotion of social values such as tolerance, gender equality, and the integration of disadvantaged group in Bulgarian society. Civil society is able to play this role due to the strong cultural and historical heritage of Bulgarian people. These values are not new to Bulgarians. They seem to have been "asleep" for a certain period of time and are now slowly re-emerging. CSOs are successfully facilitating this process and they enrich it with modern examples, resources and other contributions from external partners. This conclusion is supported by the many recommendations made both at the regional stakeholder consultations and at the National Conference which were advocating for a

return to traditional Bulgarian values which would significantly enrich civil society's activities and impact on society at large.

4. Impact

Civil society's impact on the life of Bulgarian people and on society at large is the last key dimension of the state of civil society in Bulgaria. The score of this dimension is 1.5, indicating an average level of impact for Bulgarian civil society. Figure III.4.1 presents the scores for the five subdimensions within the Impact dimension. Here, the low scores for civil society's role in holding state and private sector accountable and for civil society's responsiveness to societal interests are noticeable.

Sub-dimension scores in impact dimension ***Figure III.4.1***



4.1 Influencing Public Policy

The influencing public policy subdimension looks at how active and successful civil society is in influencing public policy. The score of the subdimension is 2.0.

Table III.4.1: Indicator assessing influencing public policy

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.1.1	Influencing public policy	2.0

4.1.1 Influencing Public Policy. In general, civil society is seen to have a rather moderate level of influence over public policy. Only about 40% of RSC Survey respondents agree with the statement that CSOs have some influence over central or municipal government. In addition, civil society is not the preferred channel of interest representation by citizens. Whereas around a third of citizens believe that policies can be influenced through direct voting at referendums, or through politicians, which are elected through a better electoral system, only 6% would rely on influencing policies through CSOs.

The USAID 2003 NGO Sustainability Index assesses civil society's advocacy impact more positively and finds that NGO advocacy capacity has increased over the last year. The positive rating of 2.5 is based on the fact that NGOs continue their work with policy-making committees and provided valuable input into legislative activities, such as around amendments to the penal code and fiscal decentralization measures.[22]

[22] On a scale from 1to 7: 1 indicating a positive assessment, and 7 indicating a poor level of development.

In general, there is a favourable environment for CSOs to become involved in legislative and regulatory processes on various issues (USAID 2003). Whereas there is some real potential for civil society's engagement around policy in terms of legal provisions, these are rarely implemented effectively. For example, municipal budgets are 'mandatorily' discussed with citizens. Similarly, the new Regional Development Act provides for the application of partnership mechanisms in the area of planning. These possibilities, however, are still rarely put into practice, despite the existence of good examples, such as the 'Local Finance' Project of BAA. For instance, whereas district councils for regional development comprise municipal NGO representatives, due to their restricted composition and functions, they however have limited influence on policy. In regional development councils local NGOs are not at all involved (European Union 2004).

At the national level, there are various means for the participation of CSOs in the process of drafting legislation and monitoring government. Examples include: civic advisory bodies, such as the National Council for Rehabilitation and Social Integration, the Council for National Assistance and the National Council for Child Protection. However, the extent to which these structures encourage CSOs in Bulgaria to contribute to policy-making is limited as stated in the Regular Report of the European Commission on CSOs Contribution 2003.

There is a need for greater transparency in the relations between CSOs and the government to ensure a broad and real consultation process. Quite frequently, draft legislation is made available to CSOs at a very late stage in the discussions and this prevents any serious and thorough analysis. In certain cases, as with the Religious Denominations Act, no consultations with CSOs were held at all. So far, as of 2004, there has not been any example of policy initiation emerging from the National Council for Rehabilitation and Social Integration or within the framework of the Public Council with the recently established Parliamentary Committee on Civil Society Issues.

In general, interaction between CSOs and government institutions typically consists of various forms of cooperation and often excludes any lobbying activities. A major reason is the desire of CSOs to obtain funding, which prevents them from taking a critical stance towards government and forces them to focus on securing some kind of financial cooperation with government institutions.

4.2 Holding State and Private Corporations Accountable

This subdimension analyses the extent to which Bulgarian civil society is active and successful in holding the state and private corporations accountable. The score for this subdimension is a low 0.9.

Table III.4.2: Indicators assessing holding state and private corporations accountable

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.2.1	Holding the state accountable	1.4
4.2.2	Holding private corporations accountable	0.3

4.2.1 Holding the State Accountable. Bulgarian civil society's watchdog role towards the state is only moderately developed. More than two-thirds of RSC Survey respondents believe civil society to be somewhat active in holding state institutions accountable. At the regional stakeholder consultations, most stakeholders agreed that despite some efforts CSOs rarely achieve actual results in this area.

There are only a few citizen organisations which are active in disclosing registered acts of corruption and providing information about the EU acquisition or their implementation, such as Coalition 2000, Transparency International, and the Institute for Regional and International Research.

For civil society to be better able to fulfil its watchdog role, the state needs to provide better levels of transparency in

the legislative process, as well as more systematic consultations with civil society as well as economic and social partners. Partnership institutions envisaged to this effect (such as public councils, supervision boards and development councils) need to play a more significant role in decision-making by being assigned clear operational functions.

The media review research found that roughly 10% of all articles related to civil society were dedicated to civil society's watchdog role. Most of them cover trade union activities or isolated actions of separate citizens. Some of the most interesting examples include: union workers being put on trial by the Ministry of Defence because of unpaid salaries and protests of disabled people in Sofia against the inaccessible environment (parks, underground etc.). Whereas these actions usually have sporadic character, the prominence in the media shows that civil society's activities to hold the state accountable are of strong interest to the media in Bulgaria.

4.2.2 Holding Private Corporations Accountable. Civil society's watchdog role towards the private sector is not pronounced at all. Less than 6% of respondents consider that CSOs monitor the corporate sector and hold it accountable, while almost 60% think that civil society is not active at all (RSC Survey 2004).

Consequently, no examples of important success in civil litigation against private corporations could be detected, despite poor occupational conditions and frequent disregard of labour rights.

Many CSOs as well as citizens are afraid to hold companies accountable for violations of rights and failure to fulfil their obligations. Trade union activities are focused on negotiations with the government and on exerting pressure for general welfare policies, rather than on the enforcement of labour rights in private companies, and most strikes concern public sector employees, such as teachers. Employees of private corporations, with the exception of taxi drivers, who protest against the state, rather than employer policies, rarely take part in strikes.

4.3 Responding to Social Interests

This subdimension analyses the extent to which Bulgarian civil society actors are responsive to social interests. The score for this subdimension is a modest 1.2.

Table III.4.3: Indicators assessing responding to social interests

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.3.1	Responsiveness	1.7
4.3.2	Public trust in CSOs	0.7

4.3.1 Responsiveness. Civil society's track record in responding to social interests is mixed. Civil society does not always succeed in organizing itself for a swift and effective response when important societal problems emerge. The examples of the war in Yugoslavia and Iraq are indicative of this. There are, however, examples to the opposite effect, such as the mass subscriptions against the closing of the Kozlodui Nuclear Power Plant, nation-wide fund-raising campaigns in the aftermath of the recent natural disaster in Asia and protests in Stara Zagora against the government's decision to destroy decommissioned missiles. Such responses are typically not organised by large NGOs, but rather by unorganized groups of people or small organizations set up by the local communities.

In general, civil society responds to problems of national importance, if the media considers a problem to be significant and worthy of wide coverage. The most popular examples are the Iraq war and the trial against the Bulgarian nurses in Libya.

4.3.2 Public Trust. Overall trust in the main institutions in society is low. There is public scepticism and mistrust in people as a whole. Interestingly, NGOs and political parties are among the institutions enjoying the least

public confidence, which are considerably lower than the ratings for the president, television, military, the church, and local authorities. Besides NGOs and political parties, the judiciary, large companies and the national government receive weak confidence ratings by Bulgarians (Table III. 4.3.2).

Table III.4.3.2: What is the level of your trust in the following institutions (low, average or high)?

	% of respondents showing:		
Institutions:	**Low level of trust**	**Average level of trust**	**High level of trust**
Church/other religious institutes	25.8	52.2	23.8
Military/in general	22.0	54.2	23.8
Press/in general	40.5	50.8	11.5
Television/in general	23.2	57.6	19.1
The Police	33.5	48.6	17.8
Judicial system	54.7	36.1	9.2
Local Authorities	35.1	52.8	12.1
Government	49.8	42.0	8.2
President	18.2	48.1	33.8
The political parties/in general	73.8	23.2	3.0
NGOs	59.1	36.3	4.6
Large companies	52.0	41.4	6.6

Source: BCSS survey 2004

4.4 Empowering Citizens

This subdimension analyses the extent to which Bulgaria's civil society actors are active and successful in empowering citizens. The score for this subdimension is 1.9.

Table III.4.4 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

Table III.4.4: Indicators assessing empowering citizens

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.4.1	Informing/educating citizens	2.6
4.4.2	Building capacity for collective action and resolving joint problems	1.8
4.4.3	Empowering marginalized people	1.1
4.4.4	Empowering women	2.2
4.4.5	Building social capital	2.5
4.4.6	Supporting/creating livelihoods	1.4

4.4.1 Informing and Educating Citizens. Stakeholders regard civil society to be rather active in public education and information activities. Almost two-thirds of the civil society stakeholders consider civil society to be active in informing and educating people on public issues (RSC Survey 2004). This positive assessment contrasts with the findings from the population survey, in which only 3% of respondents declare that in their municipality there is an NGO or group of citizens which, for the last 12 months, has done something to improve citizens' lives, has informed people on their rights or has defended them in some way or another. Of the respondents, 38% say there is no such organization and 59% answer with "I do not know."

A number of CSOs provide training and education to support the social integration of vulnerable groups. For example, S.E.G.A. projects and programs; programs and trainings of regional Roma organizations, run for

example by the CSO Drom. CSOs also offer extracurricular training to improve professional qualifications, retrain unemployed or marginalised communities and improve knowledge, skills and competences at the work place. Some more advanced CSOs provide consultancy services to raise civil society awareness and strengthen its effectiveness. There are also CSOs which provide legal advice to citizens, citizen associations and the communities where they operate.

The sector is also engaged in training and raising the awareness local authorities. In light of the forthcoming EU accession and the need for expanding partnerships in absorbing the EU funds, there are many programs focusing on training and consultations for the local and regional authorities regarding mobilizing partnerships, elaborating joint projects and initiatives, formulating local and regional strategies and plans.

The positive score given by the NAG reflects the assessment that the civil society sector is very active in informing and educating people. Many of the CSO activities are directed towards that end and it could be said that there are indisputable achievements in that direction. However, in most cases, citizens are only passive recipients of these programmes. Education activities demanded and launched by the citizens themselves are still rare. This weakness provoked some of the recommendations at the National Conference, namely that civil society should "create proactive and competent citizens by educating and training the non-formal leaders" and also "it shouldn't go after the events, but be ahead of them."

4.4.2 Building Capacity for Collective Action. Citizen empowerment is a practice little known in Bulgaria. The approach of delivering services to beneficiaries dominates over building their capacity (Miahylov et al. 2004). Accordingly, the BCSS survey 2004 revealed that less than 20% of citizens think that the support of CSOs helps them organize themselves to mobilize resources to solve local problems.

Again, this contrasts with a more positive assessment by civil society stakeholders themselves, who predominantly see civil society as somewhat or rather active in building capacity for collective actions (RSC Survey 2004). A frequently made statement at the consultations was that NGOs make strong efforts and could report some positive results in building capacity for collective action. As many as 22 different examples of programmes and campaigns were provided, such as the National Network for equal opportunities campaign, the establishment of the Community Fund in Gabrovo, the Community Forums, organized by Balkan Assist and the Foundation for Local Government Reform and Building Local Capacity in the Region of Western Rodope Mountain.

4.4.3 Empowering Marginalized People. As a whole, activities with respect to marginalised groups are a priority for civil society and enjoy high levels of donor support. A large majority of respondents considers civil society to be either somewhat or rather active in this area (RSC Survey 2004). However, high level of activism is not seen in translating into strong success as only 139% of respondents assess CSOs to be successful in their efforts to help poor people, disabled people and women by giving them a voice in public life.

Thus, whereas civil society programs and projects directed towards marginalized population are numerous, most of them are not seen as achieving any significant long-term impact.

4.4.4 Empowering Women. As mentioned earlier, civil society's activities on women's issues are one of the particular strengths of the sector. The databases of women projects and organizations show that the work of the non-governmental sector, in the field of equal opportunities for women and men during the last decade, is remarkable. Many organizations like Women's Alliance for Development, Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation, Center Nadja Foundation, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation and Animus Association Foundation contributed significantly to the adoption of the legislative acts and in determining the legal framework guaranteeing gender equality. More than 100 organizations exist, actively working in four critical areas of concern, namely violence against women, trafficking in human beings (including trafficking for sexual

exploitation) and participation of women in decision-making and in political life as well as encouraging women's entrepreneurship.

These organizations are supported by a number of international donor organizations, whereas, there is still a lack of government funding for the activities of women's NGOs. The Open Society Foundation (OSF), the Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, Stability Pact Force, the Netherlands's Foundation and PHARE are only some of the names traditionally connected with gender issues in Bulgaria.

Women's NGOs continue to grow and have established permanent relationships with representatives of the legislative, the executive and the local governments, as well as with the media. The pressure exerted by NGOs, working on gender equality issues is one of the factors influencing state policy ensuring and guaranteeing a higher status for women in the social, economic and political life of the country. One of the most influential factors in the consolidation of the sector and putting issues on the agenda is the Annual Meeting of non-governmental organizations addressing women's issues in Bulgaria.[23]

4.4.5 Building Social Capital. To assess the extent to which civil society contributes to building social capital in society, we compared the level of general trust of CSO members with the one of individuals who are not members of any CSO. The BCSS survey 2004 shows that the level of trust for members of CSOs (48%) is almost twice as high as the one for non-members (25%). This indicates that civil society plays a strong role in building trust among Bulgarian people.

4.4.6 Supporting/Creating Livelihoods. Over the last years, unemployment has significantly dropped – from 19.2% of the workforce in 2001 to 13.6% in 2003, but it still remains high. The main causes of unemployment are the elimination of work positions and workers and employees becoming redundant due to a restructuring of the public sector.

In terms of poverty and unemployment, NGOs make an indirect contribution, focusing their efforts on the inequality of vulnerable groups and minorities. A small number of NGOs do direct work to improve the overall employment environment. Most of them were established by donor organisation in cooperation with the Government (e.g. the UNDP JOBS Programme). There are many examples of Business Centres created within the JOBS Program which offer information, consultations and training connected to finding employment. Another positive example is the Centre for Sustainable Development of the Municipality of Teteven which is a Bulgarian NGO offering consulting and information services, training and seminars, support for producers of herbs and alternative agriculture products and jobs in the area of tourism.

4.5 Meeting Societal Needs

This subdimension examines the extent to which Bulgarian civil society is active and successful in meeting societal needs, especially those of poor people and other marginalized groups. The score for this subdimension is 1.7. Table III.4.6 summarizes the respective indicator scores.

Table III.4.5: Indicators assessing meeting societal needs

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.5.1	Lobbying for state service provision	1.6
4.5.2	Meeting societal needs directly	1.6
4.5.3	Meeting the needs of marginalized groups	1.9

[23] See: http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.lt/results/bulgaria.htm

4.5.1 Lobbying for State Service Provisions. There is a clear division between NGOs involved in advocacy and those that provide services. However, both types have typically been established with external funding. Lobbying organisations work on legislative, regulatory and anti-corruption initiatives, but widespread and long-term lobbying practices are rare among Bulgarian CSOs.

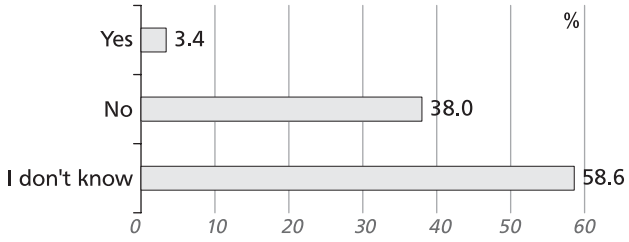
Accordingly, a majority of stakeholders could not think of any examples of CSOs lobbying for state service provision. The few examples mentioned included: lobbying for creating an accessible environment for disabled people; lobbying for "one counter" services and lobbying for changing the criteria for selecting a personal assistant within the "From Social Welfares to Employment" program. There are also a few examples connected to lobbying for certain laws or institutions, such as the introduction of the ombudsman institution, for passing the Law for Social Services and the Law for fighting human trafficking. These positive examples balance the overall negative assessment and led the NAG to assign a moderate score of 1.6.

4.5.2 Meeting Societal Needs Directly. Civil society's role in meeting social needs and providing social services is rather limited. Only 3.4% of citizens report that an NGO exists in their municipality or that a group of citizens had actually improved living conditions or been active over the past 12 months (Figure III. 4.5.2).

The largest percentage of people do not experience any NGO impact within their municipality are those living in small populated areas, those who own their own businesses, those who have a high-school education, and those from the Roma population.

Only about 3% of those interviewed indicate an organisation as having resolved some specific problem of the municipality. Most often these are problems concerning the inequality of vulnerable groups (3.2%).

Do you know of a NGO or a citizen group in your municipality which in the last 12 months has contribute to improving the living conditions, has informed the citizens about their rights or has defended on some different way their rights? ***Figure III.4.5.2***



However, in contrast to this bleak picture, the RSC Survey found that more than three quarters of respondents consider that there are successful examples of services provided by civil society while only 16% disagree with this statement. The respondents think that in most of the cases these services are directed to the population as a whole or to poor people.

Again, there is a contradiction between the results of the population and stakeholder survey. This is likely to be caused the different points of view of CSOs representatives and ordinary citizens. Stakeholders know their activities in detail, and despite a generally critical attitude, they tend to assess their efforts in a positive way. On the other hand, most civil society activities are not known to ordinary citizens in Bulgaria which could be a result of weak public relations (on the part of CSOs) or on a lack of interest (on the part of the citizens).

4.5.3 Meeting the Needs of Marginalized Groups. The focus of the civil society sector is primarily on dealing with inequalities of vulnerable groups. Up until now, CSOs used to provide services to vulnerable groups through projects, mainly funded by international donors. However, stakeholders are again divided regarding their assessment of civil society's role in meeting the needs of marginalized groups with roughly a third of respondents regarding them as moderate vs. limited.

There seems to be an understanding shared by the state and the municipalities to delegate to CSOs the provision of welfare services for the vulnerable groups. This could make appropriate conditions for the sustainable implementation of experience accumulated so far and contribute to the appearance of a welfare service market. Still, there are no well established financial mechanisms or clear institutional frameworks to this effect. The delegation of welfare services to NGOs is conditional upon the overall decentralisation process in Bulgaria.

Conclusion

Bulgarian civil society succeeded in achieving certain impacts on the development of the country at large. It has relative success in influencing public policy, empowering marginalized groups and responding to social interests and needs. These positive developments, in certain areas, contrast with low public trust in NGOs, which signifies a lack of authentic civil institutions, which could mobilize local communities and effectively defend their interests. Civil society is perceived as a partner of the authorities, as a business consultant or as social services provider, but not as an effective channel through which citizens could influence public life. Thus, civil society needs to actively work to improve its public image and to make its activities visible, appreciated and supported by citizens.

IV. Strengths and Weaknesses of Civil Society in Bulgaria

The strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Bulgaria were discussed on two occasions. First, during the consultations with regional CSOs, which were held in eight locations across Bulgaria. Second, at the national conference entitled, "The Bulgarian Civil Society Index," which took place in Sofia and was attended by more than 80 participants from civil society, government, donors and business. The topic tended to provoke lively debates and sometimes elicited opposing opinions. The results of discussions during the regional consultations were supported by the opinions of participants in the national conference and are summarized below.

1. Strengths

The strong organisational and institutional capacity of most NGOs is one of the biggest strengths of Bulgarian civil society. It was frequently mentioned at the regional consultations that Bulgarian CSOs can count on staff and members with good education, proven capacity and high professionalism. These characteristics, together with the NGO sensitiveness to "burning societal topics," equipped civil society with a wide-ranging and successful experience in implementing projects.

Another strength repeatedly mentioned during the consultations, was the comparatively well-developed network of professional and diverse NGOs. Many examples were mentioned, such as networks of environmental NGOs, BLUELINK, business organization networks and the Centre of Independent Living network.

Civil society is built upon strong shared values, which guide its main activities and programs. Promoting democracy and tolerance, defending citizen rights, empowering marginalized groups and building capacity for action in small communities, are all focus areas of NGOs' work.

In line with the opinion expressed in the two CSI surveys (BCSS survey 2004 and RSC Survey 2004) both the regional consultations and the National Conference also considered civil society to cooperate well with local authorities. There are numerous examples of successful and sustainable projects at the local level implemented in partnership with municipalities and regional administrations. As for the central authorities–the examples of fruitful cooperation usually concern changes in legislation.

When listing the strengths of Bulgarian civil society, it is important to note that NGO representatives often mentioned the strong culture of volunteering and charitable giving. However, they always spoke about strong traditions which, for now, are well forgotten and in need of being revived.

2. Weaknesses

In accordance with the survey results, one of the weaknesses identified at the consultations was low citizen and community representation in most NGOs. Based on their own experience, CSO representatives pointed out that often CSOs have been created in response to donor requirements or to carry out a certain project. Consequently, the CSOs' activities are to inform and support citizens without really empowering them or building active citizens or communities.

Another weakness is the financial dependency of the sector on foreign donors, combined with insufficient revenue from other sources. Financial uncertainty is one of the reasons CSOs orient towards programs funded by foreign donors, not towards the needs of local communities. Still, most of the CSOs that were consulted took into consideration the forthcoming EU accession which will bring a withdrawal of most donor programs and an orientation towards new requirements. This weakness could therefore be transformed into a challenge since it will force CSOs consider new innovative models of financing and ways of conducting their activities. However, so far, civil society is seen to be lacking any coherent development or civic renewal mission for Bulgaria, which might affect the sector negatively after the withdrawal of the donor programs.

The fact that NGOs are primarily based in large towns, mostly in Sofia, was also mentioned as a weakness. According to stakeholders, this situation leads to suspicions regarding centralized distribution of information and resources and about corruption in the third sector.

The regional stakeholder consultations demonstrated one more weakness of civil society, namely lack of contacts between regional and local NGOs and informal groups. It was mentioned more than once that "it is good that a Sofia organization came to make us meet each other and share about our projects and experience."

Developing visions for the future and strengthening contacts and partnerships turned out to be the main issues that Bulgarian CSOs need to address.

V. Recommendations

Recommendations for strengthening civil society were made by representatives of CSOs during the consultations with regional stakeholders and by the participants in the national conference on the Civil Society Index. Naturally, they respond to the main weaknesses of civil society in Bulgaria.

Promoting informal civic structures: There is a need to encourage civil society formations that arise to meet a specific need or resolve a specific problem (i.e. to develop organizations that emerge through a bottom–up process). In the limited instances in which this approach has been applied, it has proven successful. Such formations are usually very popular and attractive to the people concerned with the respective problem. The main issue is of financial character, as once there is no more external funding provided, these CSOs stop existing. However, the closing down of these organisations often coincides with the solution of the problem they seek to address.

Promoting volunteering and giving: As one participant put it, "Bulgarian citizens need to rediscover their traditional yet somewhat forgotten values." Here, also government needs to play a role by supporting volunteer action and donations more strongly.

Involving citizens in donor programming: Civil society should find common points of interest between the needs of the people and the priorities of donor organizations. One way to achieve this is to ensure citizen participation in the donor's policy-making processes. This recommendation was addressed at the National Conference in Sofia, and was met by the present donors with scepticism. However, stronger consultations between donors and NGOs are likely to guarantee better allocation of donor funds in the remaining years of their activities in Bulgaria.

Increasing transparency in EU funding: Stakeholders advocated for broader and more transparent citizen participation when planning the allocation of EU funds to ensure that they are equitably distributed and spent according to their designated purpose. A more transparent process is needed involving the efforts of all stakeholders, including NGOs, local authorities and the media. Currently allocation primarily takes place through the government, ministries and agencies, as well as some CSO consortiums. This strongly centralized approach, once again, threatens the independence of CSOs from the state, since EU funds will become the core financial sources for them in the future.

Expanding civil society's role in service provision: Civil society should become a major partner in social service provision for citizens. The area of social policy, such as services in healthcare and education, presents a particular opportunity in this regard. Participants agreed that state institutions should be more open and delegate some of the services to organizations who are better qualified, apply modern approaches and enjoy the trust of the community. There are already some examples in this respect, which demonstrate efficiency and positive results. This is seen as a good trend for the future and it is recommended that the state should broaden the scope of partnerships with civil society. A new law for social services is being prepared, which is an

indication for positive steps towards this end. However, NGOs need to sustain this positive trend and to continue the constructive dialogue with the new Parliament to be elected in June 2005.

Improving civil society's links with citizens: CSOs should be conducting "field studies" of the needs of citizens, since the best civil society initiatives are born out of links to a specific problem which is relevant to many people.

Promoting direct democracy: Civil society should advocate and lobby for the introduction of various forms of direct democracy. Existing legislation regulating referenda and citizen initiatives is restrictive and provides neither opportunities, nor stimuli for their application. Steps should be taken towards a more favourable environment for referenda at the local and national levels, which will make citizens more actively involved in governance issues and politicians, as well as more sensitive towards the opinion of the voters. The application of direct democracy tools is a guarantee for establishing a bilateral, permanent communication between the government and civil society at all levels.

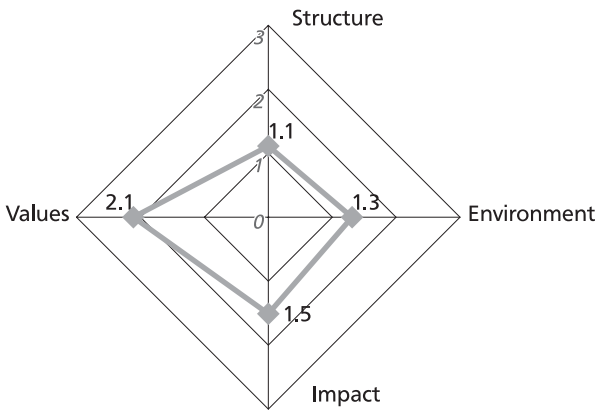
Introducing the one percent tax law: In light of Bulgaria's upcoming accession to the EU in 2007 the political and social context of donor support for Bulgarian civil society is changing. Some of the major donors are already phasing out their activities, cutting down their budgets and changing their requirements for grant support towards more policy-oriented work. The primary concern for CSOs is finding ways to self finance their activities. Thus, one of the results of the National Conference was to build a well-structured working group to work on a bill which would allow the possibility to transfer 1% of people's taxes to a specific NGO, as it the case in other Central and Eastern European countries.

VI. Conclusion

The conclusion seeks to draw together the main findings and recommendation of the CSI project in Bulgaria. It aims to offer a thorough interpretation of the state of Bulgarian civil society, as depicted in the Civil Society Diamond, and then engages some of the key findings and recommendations resulting from the CSI project in Bulgaria.

The results from the surveys were summarized in a report made available to a National Advisory Group, consisting of experts in the area of civil society. Based on the data and the NAG's expertise, the NAG assessed the status of the four dimensions of civil society using a scoring scale of 0 to 3, and applying the CIVICUS methodology. This produced the following Civil Society Diamond for Bulgaria:

Bulgaria civil society diamond ***Figure IV.1***



The Bulgarian Civil Society Diamond shows relatively low scores for the Structure dimension (1.1), somewhat higher scores for the Environment (1.3) and Impact (1.5) dimensions and a relatively high score for the Values dimension (2.1).

The low score for Structure (1.1) is mainly due to the low participation of ordinary citizens in organizational structures of civil society. This shortcoming of civil society in Bulgaria can be seen to determine its overall structure and also influences the scores on the other three dimensions. Closed in a narrow professional community, CSOs are doing little to empower local communities and individual citizens. As a result, they enjoy a low level of public confidence and have little impact. Yet, the absence of Bulgarian "citizens" in civil society activities is not set in stone. The civic identity of people can be invigorated with a changed vision for the ordinary citizen as an actor within and not a recipient of governance.

The high score of the Values dimension appears overestimated at first glance, particularly if set against the background of the low civic spirit. However, civil society's strong values are a consequence of the specific role

of CSOs in Bulgaria as importers of the values of the modern world. Civil society imports and reinforces modern values for empathy with vulnerable groups, sustainable development and democracy in Bulgaria.

We believe that the relatively low scores of environment, structure and impact dimensions of the CSI are realistic and objective. They are supported by both the survey data and the fact that all citizens and organizations surveyed showed a self-critical and demanding attitude. This is a good sign of a desire to improve and develop civil society in Bulgaria.

The forthcoming EU accession will not only have positive impacts on Bulgarian civil society, but raise certain challenges as well. The withdrawal of most current donors will create some difficulties for many CSOs as they will need to find new ways to finance and sustain their activities. Even now, eligibility criteria for project support have become more demanding and hard to meet. CSOs increasingly have to prove their ability to work with civic advocacy tools, i.e. influence policy-making, learn to lobby and work with the institutions, social partners and above all with the citizens.

Bulgarian civil society is undergoing times of rapid, and sometimes negative, change. Thus, the Chinese curse, "I wish you to live in interesting times" may aptly describe the current situation. Yet, it is the task of civil society stakeholders not to regard the current circumstances as a predetermined crisis, but rather as an opportunity to build a stronger and more sustainable civil society.

VII. Next Steps

One specific outcome of the national conference was the establishment of a working group to draft a bill on tax benefits for civic organizations or initiatives. The group includes CSO representatives, lawyers, government ministries and international experts. The first workshop will be held in May 2005. This will be BAA's first follow-up project to the CSI.

Also, BAA will make every attempt to publicise the findings of this study as widely as possible, to popularise this publication amongst CSOs and the public, which is less familiar with the topics discussed in this report, as well as the government, civil servants and politicians both at the central and regional level.

This publication should also serve as a useful reference text for students of civil society and related themes. BAA will initiate meetings with those members of the NAG and other interested parties, who are interested in continuing to be involved in taking the findings and recommendations of the CSI project further. For example, by elaborating on the recommendations and attempting to put them into practice.

In its English version, this publication will serve as the basis for international comparisons within the framework of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index project as a whole. Bulgaria was the second (after the Czech Republic) of more than 50 countries involved in the project to create its Civil Society Diamond and hold a National Workshop. Bulgaria will also be amongst the first to publish a report on the research conducted for the CSI project. Other countries will complete their work on the CSI during the course of 2005.

In 2006, CIVICUS will publish a two-volume global CSI report, providing concise country profiles of civil society in the participating countries as well as comparative analyses and insights into interesting practices identified by the CSI. CIVICUS will then evaluate and refine the methodology employed on the basis of current experience and findings and plans to repeat the project in the future. Also, a global CSI conference is being planned for 2006, which will convene all of the national teams that participated in the CSI, as well as other project partners and stakeholders from all over the world.

List of appendices

Appendix 1: List of National Advisory Group and Public Council Members

Appendix 2: Research Studies Conducted in Bulgaria as Part of the CSI Project

Appendix 3: CSI Scoring Matrix

Appendix 4: Bibliography

Appendix 1:

Lists of the National Advisory Group and the Public Council

National Advisory Group

1) Vassil Gromkov – an actor at the Vidin Puppet Theatre
2) Georgy Shivarov – vice-chairman of the Board of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce, Sofia
3) Dimitar Sotirov – executive director of the Bulgarian Media Coalition, Sofia
4) Donka Mihaylova – chairperson of Znanie Associaton, Lovech
5) Dora Petkova – UNDP, Sofia
6) Ivanka Doushkova – executive director of the Restoration and Development Union, Haskovo
7) Ivo Hristov – an expert to the Law Matters Commission with the National Assembly, Sofia
8) Ilian Iliev – executive director of the Public Center for Sustainable Development and Environment, Varna
9) Lenko Lenkov – executive director of Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation, Sofia
10) Liubica Tomova – executive director of the Association of South-West Municipalities, Blagoevgrad
11) Maria Zlatareva – program director, UNDP, Sofia
12) Petia Atsinova – executive director of the Stara Zagora Agency for Regional Economic Development
13) Reneta Veneva – executive director of the National Alliance for Volunteer Action, Plovdiv
14) Sonya Enilova – chairperson of the Board of the Bourgas Tourist Association

Public Council

1) Angel Naydenov – chairman of the Student Council with the Sofia University
2) Georgy Arnaudov – executive director of Star City Ltd.
3) Prof. Georgy Lozanov – chairperson of the Board of the Bulgarian Media Coalition
4) Ginka Chavdarova – executive director of the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria
5) Yovko Yovkov – mayor of Sevlievo Municipality
6) Mihail Nedelchev – chairman of the Board of Citizen Association

Appendix 2:

Research Studies Conducted in Bulgaria as Part of the CSI Project Implementation

The project implementation in Bulgaria attempted to include as many of the research methods proposed by CIVICUS as possible.

The study on the Bulgarian civil society started with a thorough **review of secondary information** in relation to its four dimensions – Structure, Environment, Value and Impact. It was easier to find information regarding the Environment and Structure; collecting information on the other two civil society dimensions turned to be rather challenging due to their more subjective character.

The basic observation while gathering secondary data to be included in the Country Report for Bulgaria was that information published on international Internet sources was much more accessible than searching for it in other ways. A great quantity of information relevant to the dimensions and respectively to the indicators was found in the UNDP Human Development Reports. Despite the fact that many Bulgarian NGOs gave us their reports and surveys reflecting the civil society, most of them were already out-of-date because of the dynamics in the third sector development. Collecting secondary information continued in parallel with conducting the primary researches.

Regional stakeholder survey

The survey was conducted in the period May–July, 2004. The process started with translating and adapting the questionnaire included in the CSI toolkit. Together with preparing the questionnaire information about functioning NGOs around the country was collected. The questionnaire was submitted to 110 organizations and individuals distributed among the 6 main planning regions in Bulgaria and in Sofia as follows:

Regions	Number of sent questionnaires	Number of received questionnaires
North-West Region(Vidin, Vratsa and Montana districts)	10	7
North Region (Lovech, Pleven, Rousse, Gabrovo, Veliko Tarnovo districts)	22	15
North-East Region (Dobrich, Shoumen, Silisra, Varna, Targovishte and Razgrad districts)	15	11
South Region (Haskovo, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Kurdzhali and Smolian districts)	12	10
South-West Region (Kiustendil and Blagoevgrad districts)	8	5
South-East region (Bourgas, Sliven and Yambol)	10	6
Sofia	33	19
Total:	110	73

Seventy-three questionnaires were filled in and sent to the office of Balkan Assist for further processing which is about 70% of the sample. Data and analysis of the regional stakeholder survey is included in the description of lots of the civil society indicators. A plan for the regional stakeholder consultations was prepared after the thorough review of the returned questionnaires. The locations for the consultations were defined based on the following factors:

- number of questionnaires filled in from the respective region;
- recommendations from NAG members as well as the voiced desire of some of them to support the organization of consultations;
- opportunities to cover as larger a part of the territory of the country as possible;

It is important to mention that the RSC were held with the support of the UNDP Chitalishta Project. That is why one more condition was respected when the RSC locations were defined – presence of an active regional centre under the Chitalishta Project.

Regional Stakeholder Consultations

Regional Stakeholder consultations were organized in Vidin, Pleven, Shoumen, Kurdzhali and Blagoevgrad with the support of the Regional centres under UNDP Chitalishta Project (which enjoy high respect and influence in these 5 towns). Representatives of the centres sent invitations to the participants (in coordination with the NIT) and were responsible for the logistics. All those who had filled in the questionnaire were invited. There were NGO representatives, representatives of the local business, the local administration, media etc. A total of 71 people attended these consultations dedicated to discussing the civil society in Bulgaria – what it is as well as its weaknesses and strengths. The results of these regional meetings are included in the Country report.

To add more value to the consultations and in order to fully collect the opinion of representatives of informal citizen groups and associations, three more regional stakeholder consultations were organized by NAG members. The three new locations were Stara Zagora, Vratsa and Bourgas. With these additional three meeting the country was fully covered as well as the different types of citizen organizations. About 38 people attended these meetings.

All the regional stakeholder consultations were different from one another having in mind the specifics in the respective region and in the composition. All the same there were similar answers regarding trends for the civil society, perspectives and challenges.

Representative Sociological Survey

The sociological survey on the citizen practices of ordinary people was among the most important research methods included in the project. In the very beginning – when discussing the project implementation – the NIT made a decision that the survey would cover the whole country. With the purpose to ensure its professional realization, Balkan Assist Association mandated the survey to ASA Agency for socio-economic analysis. The survey was conducted in the period August – September, 2004. A total of 1000 respondents were interviewed.

These are some of the sample specifics: a larger share of women than men; the highest is the share of people with secondary education, people living in villages and district centres, employed people and retired people and married. The share of people with high and low incomes is almost equal.

The results of the BCSS survey were described in a separate report and the most of them are included in this report.

Media Review

The media monitoring was implemented in the period April–June, 2004 by two volunteers – a student at the Sofia University and a member of NAG. Notwithstanding the ambitious aims regarding the media review, it turned to be a method implemented only partially; respectively the results of this survey are vaguely mentioned in the report. The NIT wanted to thoroughly monitor a national daily, a national radio, a private national TV (eventually) and a regional weekly. Having in mind the problems in finding and motivating volunteers to implement the monitoring, the media review in Bulgaria covered only 24 hours newspaper and the Vidin daily – NIE. The articles in the Vidin newspaper dedicated to civil society turned to be an insignificant number nevertheless it was reviewed for a period of three month. The main conclusion of the review on "24 hours" is that although somehow neglected, the civil society is still in the focus of the media in Bulgaria when it is about cooperation between civil organizations, holding the state accountable, promoting transparency and reflecting some national donation campaigns.

Review of the corporate social responsibility

This review was assigned to the student volunteer again. She had to study the web-sites of big companies in Bulgaria and to select those activities which were dedicated to overcoming the negative consequences of their operation. The list of the companies was prepared by the NIT after a consultation with some of the NAG members. The results of the survey are described in the country report under the respective indicator – 2.7.2. Corporate Social Responsibility.

Appendix 3:

The Scoring Matrix

1. Structure

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
1.1. Breadth of citizen participation	**How widespread is citizen involvement in civil society? What proportion of citizens engage in civil society activities?**				
1.1.1. Non-partisan political action	What percentage of people have ever undertaken any form of non-partisan political action (e.g. written a letter to a newspaper, signed a petition, attended a demonstration)?	A very small minority (less than 10%).	A minority (10% to 30%).	A significant proportion (31% to 65%).	A large majority (more than 65%).
1.1.2 Charitable giving	What percentage of people donates to charity on a regular basis?	A very small minority (less than 10%).	A minority (10% to 30%).	A significant proportion (31% to 65%).	A large majority (more than 65%).
1.1.3 CSO membership	What percentage of people belong to at least one CSO?	A small minority (less than 30%).	A minority (30% to 50%).	A majority (51% to 65%).	A large majority (more than 65%).
1.1.4 Volunteering	What percentage of people undertake volunteer work on a regular basis (at least once a year)?	A very small minority (less than 10%).	A small minority (10% to 30%).	A minority (31% to 50%).	A majority (more than 50%).
1.1.5 Collective community action	What percentage of people have participated in a collective community action within the last year (e.g. attended a community meeting, participated in a community-organised event or a collective effort to solve a community problem)?	A small minority (less than 30%).	A minority (30% -50%)	A majority (51% to 65%).	A large majority (more than 65%)

1.2. Depth of citizen participation	**How deep/meaningful is citizen participation in CS? How frequently/extensively do people engage in CS activities?**				
1 2.1 Charitable giving	How much (i.e. what percentage of personal income) do people who give to charity on a regular basis donate, on average, per year?	Less than 1%	1% to 2%	2.1% to 3%	More than 3%
1.2.2 Volunteering	How many hours per month, on average, do volunteers devote to volunteer work?	Less than 2 hours	2 to 5 hours	5.1 to 8 hours	More than 8 hours.
1.2.3 CSO membership	What percentage of CSO members belong to more than one CSO?	A small minority (less than 30%)	A minority (30% to 50%)	A majority (51% to 65%)	A large majority (more than 65%)

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
1.3. Diversity of civil society participants	**How diverse/representative is the civil society arena? Do all social groups participate equitably in civil society? Are any groups dominant or excluded?**				
1.3.1 CSO membership	To what extent do CSOs represent all significant social groups (e.g. women, rural dwellers, poor people, and minorities)?	Significant social groups are absent / excluded from CSOs.	Significant social groups are largely absent from CSOs	Significant social groups are under-represented in CSOs.	CSOs equitably represent all social groups. No group is noticeably under-represented.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
1.3.2 CSO leadership	To what extent is there diversity in CSO leadership? To what extent does CSO leadership represent all significant social groups (e.g. women, rural dwellers, poor people, and minorities)?	Significant social groups are absent / excluded from CSO leadership roles.	Significant social groups are largely absent from CSO leadership roles	Significant social groups are under-represented in CSO leadership roles.	CSO leadership equitably represents all social groups. No group is noticeably under-represented.
1.3.3 Distribution of CSOs	How are CSOs distributed throughout the country?	CSOs are highly concentrated in the major urban centres.	CSOs are largely concentrated in urban areas.	CSOs are present in all but the most remote areas of the country.	CSOs are present in all areas of the country.

1.4. Level of organisation	How well-organised is civil society? What kind of infrastructure exists for civil society?				
1.4.1 Existence of CSO umbrella bodies	What percentage of CSOs belong to a federation or umbrella body of related organisations?	A small minority (less than 30%)	A minority (30% to 50%)	A majority (51% to 70%)	A large majority (more than 70%)
1.4.2 Effectiveness of CSO umbrella bodies	How effective do CSO stakeholders judge existing federations or umbrella bodies to be in achieving their defined goals?	Completely ineffective (or non-existent).	Largely ineffective.	Somewhat effective.	Effective.
1.4.3 Self-regulation	Are there efforts among CSOs to self-regulate? How effective and enforceable are existing self-regulatory mechanisms? What percentage of CSOs abide by a collective code of conduct (or some other form of self-regulation)?	There are no efforts among CSOs to self-regulate.	Preliminary efforts have been to self-regulate but only a small minority of CSOs are involved and impact is extremely limited.	Some mechanisms for CSO self-regulation are in place but only some sectors of CSOs are involved and there is no effective method of enforcement. As a result, impact is limited.	Mechanisms for CSO self-regulation are in place and function quite effectively. A discernible impact on CSO behaviour can be detected.
1.4.4 Support infrastructure	What is the level of support infrastructure for civil society? How many civil society support organisations exist in the country? Are they effective?	There is no support infrastructure for civil society.	There is very limited infrastructure for civil society.	Support infrastructure exists for some sectors of civil society and is expanding.	There is a well-developed support infrastructure for civil society.
1.4.5 International linkages	What proportion of CSOs have international linkages (e.g. are members of international networks, participate in global events)?	Only a handful of „elite" CSOs have international linkages.	A limited number of (mainly national-level) CSOs have international linkages.	A moderate number of (mainly national-level) CSOs have international linkages.	A significant number of CSOs from different sectors and different levels (grassroots to national) have international linkages.

1.5. Inter-relations	How strong / productive are relations among civil society actors?				
1.5.1 Communication	What is the extent of communication between CS actors?	Very little	Limited	Moderate	Significant
1.5.2 Cooperation	How much do CS actors cooperate with each other on issues of common concern? Can examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances/coalitions (around a specific issue or common concern) be identified?	CS actors do not cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. No examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances/coalitions can be identified / detected.	It is very rare that CS actors cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. Very few examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances / coalitions can be identified / detected.	CS actors on occasion cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. Some examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances / coalitions can be identified / detected.	CS actors regularly cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. Numerous examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances / coalitions can be identified / detected.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
1.6. Resources	**To what extent do CSOs have adequate resources to achieve their goals?**				
1.6.1 Financial resources	How adequate is the level of financial resources for CSOs?	On average, CSOs suffer from a serious financial resource problem.	On average, CSOs have inadequate financial resources to achieve their goals.	On average, CSOs have most of the financial resources they require to achieve their defined goals.	On average, CSOs have an adequate and secure financial resource base.
1.6.2 Human resources	How adequate is the level of human resources for CSOs?	On average, CSOs suffer from a serious human resource problem.	On average, CSOs have inadequate human resources to achieve their goals.	On average, CSOs have most of the human resources they require to achieve their defined goals.	On average, CSOs have an adequate and secure human resource base.
1.6.3 Technological and infrastructural resources	How adequate is the level of technological and infrastructural resources for CSOs?	On average, CSOs suffer from a serious technological and infrastructural resource problem.	On average, CSOs have inadequate technological and infrastructural resources to achieve their goals.	On average, CSOs have most of the technological and infrastructural resources they require to achieve their defined goals.	On average, CSOs have an adequate and secure technological and infrastructural resource base.

2. Environment

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.1. Political context	**What is the political situation in the country and its impact on civil society?**				
2.1.1. Political rights	How strong are the restrictions on citizens' political rights (e.g. to participate freely in political processes, elect political leaders through free and fair elections, freely organise in political parties)?	There are severe restrictions on the political rights of citizens. Citizens cannot participate in political processes.	There are some restrictions on the political rights of citizens and their participation in political processes.	Citizens are endowed with substantial political rights and meaningful opportunities for political participation. There are minor and isolated restrictions on the full freedom of citizens' political rights and their participation in political processes.	People have the full freedom and choice to exercise their political rights and meaningfully participate in political processes.
2.1.2 Political competition	What are the main characteristics of the party system in terms of number of parties, ideological spectrum, institutionalisation and party competition?	Single party system.	Small number of parties based on personalism, clientelism or appealing to identity politics.	Multiple parties, but weakly institutionalised and / or lacking ideological distinction	Robust, multi-party competition with well-institutionalised and ideologically diverse parties.
2.1.3. Rule of law	To what extent is the rule of law entrenched in the country?	There is general disregard for the law by citizens and the state.	There is low confidence in and frequent violations of the law by citizens and the state.	There is a moderate level of confidence in the law. Violations of the law by citizens and the state are not uncommon.	Society is governed by fair and predictable rules, which are generally abided by.
2.1.4. Corruption	What is the level of perceived corruption in the public sector?	High	Substantial	Moderate	Low
2.1.5. State effectiveness	To what extent is the state able to fulfil its defined functions?	The state bureaucracy has collapsed or is entirely ineffective (e.g. due to political, economic or social crisis).	The capacity of the state bureaucracy is extremely limited.	State bureaucracy is functional but perceived as incompetent and / or non-responsive.	State bureaucracy is fully functional and perceived to work in the public's interests.
2.1.6. Decentralisation	To what extent is government expenditure devolved to sub-national authorities?	Sub-national share of government expenditure is less than 20.0%.	Sub-national share of government expenditure is between 20.0% and 34.9%.	Sub-national share of government expenditure is between 35.0% than 49.9%.	Sub-national share of government expenditure is more than 49.9%.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.2. Basic freedoms & rights	**To what extent are basic freedoms ensured by law and in practice?**				
2.2.1. Civil liberties	To what extent are civil liberties (e.g. freedom of expression, association, assembly) ensured by law and in practice?	Civil liberties are systematically violated.	There are frequent violations of civil liberties.	There are isolated or occasional violations of civil liberties.	Civil liberties are fully ensured by law and in practice.
2.2.2. Information rights	To what extent is public access to information guaranteed by law? How accessible are government documents to the public?	No laws guarantee information rights. Citizen access to government documents is extremely limited.	Citizen access to government documents is limited but expanding.	Legislation regarding public access to information is in place, but in practice, it is difficult to obtain government documents.	Government documents are broadly and easily accessible to the public.
2.2.3. Press freedoms	To what extent are press freedoms ensured by law and in practice?	Press freedoms are systematically violated.	There are frequent violations of press freedoms.	There are isolated violations of press freedoms.	Freedom of the press is fully ensured by law and in practice.

2.3. Socio-economic context	**What is the socio-economic situation in the country and its impact on civil society?**				
2.3.1. Socio-economic context How much do socio-economic conditions in the country represent a barrier to the effective functioning of civil society?	Social & economic conditions represent a serious barrier to the effective functioning of civil society. More than five of the following conditions are present: 1. Widespread poverty (e.g. more than 40% of people live on $2 per day) 2. Civil war (armed conflict in last 5 years) 3. Severe ethnic and/or religious conflict 4. Severe economic crisis (e.g. external debt is more than GNP) 5. Severe social crisis (over last 2 years) 6. Severe socio-economic inequities (Gini coefficient > 0.4) 7. Pervasive adult illiteracy (over 40%) 8. Lack of IT infrastructure (i.e. less than 5 hosts per 10.000 inhabitants)	Social & economic conditions significantly limit the effective functioning of civil society. Three, four or five of the conditions indicated are present.	Social & economic conditions somewhat limit the effective functioning of civil society. One or two of the conditions indicated are present.	Social & economic conditions do not represent a barrier to the effective functioning of civil society. None of the conditions indicated is present.	

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.4. Socio-cultural context	**To what extent are socio-cultural norms and attitudes conducive or detrimental to civil society?**				
2.4.1. Trust	How much do members of society trust one another?	Relationships among members of society are characterised by mistrust (e.g. less than 10% of people score on the World Value Survey (WVS) trust indicator).	There is widespread mistrust among members of society. (e.g. 10% to 30% of people score on the WVS trust indicator).	There is a moderate level of trust among members of society. (e.g. 31% to 50% of people score on the WVS trust indicator).	There is a high level of trust among members of society (e.g. more than 50% of people score on the WVS trust indicator).
2.4.2. Tolerance	How tolerant are members of society?	Society is characterised by widespread intolerance (e.g. average score on WVS-derived tolerance indicator is 3.0 or higher).	Society is characterised by a low level of tolerance (e.g. indicator between 2.0 and 2.9).	Society is characterised by a moderate level of tolerance (e.g. indicator between 1.0 and 1.9).	Society is characterised by a high level of tolerance (e.g. indicator less than 1.0).
2.4.3. Public spiritedness	How strong is the sense of public spiritedness among members of society?	Very low level of public spiritedness in society (e.g. average score on WVS-derived public spiritedness indicator is more than 3.5)	Low level of public spiritedness (e.g. indicator between 2.6 and 3.5)	Moderate level of public spiritedness (e.g. indicator between 1.5 and 2.5)	High level of public spiritedness. (e.g. indicator less than 1.5)

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.5. Legal environment	**To what extent is the existing legal environment enabling or disabling to civil society?**				
2.5.1. CSO registration	How supportive is the CSO registration process? Is the process (1) simple, (2) quick, (3) inexpensive, (4) Following legal provisions (5) consistently applied?	The CSO registration process is not supportive at all. Four or five of the quality characteristics are absent.	The CSO registration is not very supportive Two or three quality characteristics are absent	The CSO registration process can be judged as relatively supportive. One quality characteristic is absent.	The CSO registration process is supportive. None of the quality characteristics is absent.
2.5.2. Allowable advocacy activities	To what extent are CSOs free to engage in advocacy / criticize government?	CSOs are not allowed to engage in advocacy or criticise the government.	There are excessive and / or vaguely defined constraints on advocacy activities.	Constraints on CSOs' advocacy activities are minimal and clearly defined, such as prohibitions on political campaigning.	CSOs are permitted to freely engage in advocacy and criticism of government.
2.5.3. Tax laws favourable to CSOs	How favourable is the tax system to CSOs? How narrow/broad is the range of CSOs that are eligible for tax exemptions, if any? How significant are these exemptions?	The tax system impedes CSOs. No tax exemption or preference of any kind is available for CSOs.	The tax system is burdensome to CSOs. Tax exemptions or preferences are available only for a narrow range of CSOs (e.g. humanitarian organisations) or for limited sources of income (e.g., grants or donations).	The tax system contains some incentives favouring CSOs. Only a narrow range of CSOs is excluded from tax exemptions or preferences and/or. Exemptions or preferences are available from some taxes and some activities.	The tax system provides favourable treatment for CSOs. Exemptions or preferences are available from a range of taxes and for a range of activities, limited only in appropriate circumstances.
2.5.4. Tax benefits for philanthropy	How broadly available are tax deductions or credits, or other tax benefits, to encourage individual and corporate giving?	No tax benefits are available (to individuals or corporations) for charitable giving.	Tax benefits are available for a very limited set of purposes or types of organisations.	Tax benefits are available for a fairly broad set of purposes or types of organisations.	Significant tax benefits are available for a broad set of purposes or types of organisations.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.6. State-civil society relations	**What is the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the state?**				
2.6.1. Autonomy	To what extent can civil society exist and function independently of the state? To what extent are CSOs free to operate without excessive government interference? Is government oversight reasonably designed and limited to protect legitimate public interests?	The state controls civil society.	CSOs are subject to frequent unwarranted interference in their operations.	The state accepts the existence of an independent civil society but CSOs are subject to occasional unwarranted government interference.	CSOs operate freely. They are subject only to reasonable oversight linked to clear and legitimate public interests.
2.6.2. Dialogue	To what extent does the state dialogue with civil society? How inclusive and institutionalized are the terms and rules of engagement, if they exist?	There is no meaningful dialogue between civil society and the state.	The state only seeks to dialogue with a small sub-set of CSOs on an ad hoc basis.	The state dialogues with a relatively broad range of CSOs but on a largely ad hoc basis.	Mechanisms are in place to facilitate systematic dialogue between the state and a broad and diverse range of CSOs.
2.6.3 Cooperation / support	How narrow/broad is the range of CSOs that receive state resources (in the form of grants, contracts, etc.)?	The level of state resources channelled through CSOs is insignificant.	Only a very limited range of CSOs receives state resources.	A moderate range of CSOs receives state resources.	The state channels significant resources to a large range of CSOs.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.7. Private sector-civil society relations	**What is the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the private sector?**				
2.7.1. Private sector attitude	What is the general attitude of the private sector towards civil society actors?	Generally hostile	Generally indifferent	Generally positive	Generally supportive

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
2.7.2 Corporate social responsibility	How developed are notions and actions of corporate social responsibility?	Major companies show no concern about the social and environmental impacts of their operations.	Major companies pay lip service to notions of corporate social responsibility. However, in their operations they frequently disregard negative social and environmental impacts.	Major companies are beginning to take the potential negative social and environmental impacts of their operations into account.	Major companies take effective measures to protect against negative social and environmental impacts.
2.7.3. Corporate philanthropy	How narrow/broad is the range of CSOs that receive support from the private sector?	Corporate philanthropy is insignificant.	Only a very limited range of CSOs receives funding from the private sector.	A moderate range of CSOs receives funding from the private sector.	The private sector channels resources to a large range of CSOs.

3. Values

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
3.1. Democracy	**To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote democracy?**				
3.1.1 Democratic practices within CSOs	To what extent do CSOs practice internal democracy? How much control do members have over decision-making? Are leaders selected through democratic elections?	A large majority (i.e. more than 75%) of CSOs do not practice internal democracy (e.g. members have little / no control over decision-making, CSOs are characterised by patronage, nepotism).	A majority of CSOs (i.e. more than 50%) do not practice internal democracy (e.g. members have little/no control over decision-making, CSOs are characterised by patronage, nepotism).	A majority of CSOs (i.e. more than 50%) practice internal democracy (e.g. members have significant control over decision-making; leaders are selected through democratic elections).	A large majority of CSOs (i.e. more than 75%) practice internal democracy (e.g. members have significant control over decision-making; leaders are selected through democratic elections).
3.1.2 CS actions to promote democracy	How much does CS actively promote democracy at a societal level?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in promoting a democratic society. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.

3.2. Transparency	**To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote transparency?**				
3.2.1 Corruption within civil society	How widespread is corruption within CS?	Instances of corrupt behaviour within CS are very frequent.	Instances of corrupt behaviour within CS are frequent.	There are occasional instances of corrupt behaviour within CS.	Instances of corrupt behaviour within CS are very rare.
3.2.2 Financial transparency of CSOs	How many CSOs are financially transparent? What percentage of CSOs makes their financial accounts publicly available?	A small minority of CSOs (less than 30%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	A minority of CSOs (30% -50%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	A small majority of CSOs (51% - 65%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	A large majority of CSOs (more than 65%) make their financial accounts publicly available.
3.2.3 CS actions to promote transparency	How much does CS actively promote government and corporate transparency?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and/or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in demanding government and corporate transparency. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
3.3. Tolerance	**To what extent do civil society actors and organisations practice and promote tolerance?**				
3.3.1 Tolerance within the CS arena	To what extent is CS a tolerant arena?	CS is dominated by intolerant forces. The expression of only a narrow sub-set of views is tolerated.	Significant forces within civil society do not tolerate others' views without encountering protest from civil society at large.	There are some intolerant forces within civil society, but they are isolated from civil society at large.	Civil society is an open arena where the expression of all viewpoints is actively encouraged. Intolerant behaviour are strongly denounced by civil society at large.
3.3.2 CS actions to promote tolerance	How much does CS actively promote tolerance at a societal level?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and/or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in promoting a tolerant society. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
3.4. Non-violence	**To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote non-violence?**				
3.4.1 Non-violence within the CS arena	How widespread is the use of violent means (such as damage to property or personal violence) among CS actors to express their interests in the public sphere?	Significant mass-based groups within CS use violence as the primary means of expressing their interests.	Some isolated groups within CS regularly use violence to express their interests without encountering protest from civil society at large.	Some isolated groups within CS occasionally resort to violent actions, but are broadly denounced by CS at large.	There is a high level of consensus within CS regarding the principle of non-violence. Acts of violence by CS actors are extremely rare and strongly denounced.
3.4.2 CS actions to promote non-violence and peace	How much does CS actively promote a non-violent society? For example, how much does civil society support the non-violent resolution of social conflicts and peace? Address issues of violence against women, child abuse, violence among youths etc.?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions actually contribute to societal violence.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in promoting a non-violent society. CS actions in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
3.5. Gender equity	**To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote gender equity?**				
3.5.1 Gender equity within the CS arena	To what extent is civil society a gender equitable arena?	Women are excluded from civil society leadership roles.	Women are largely absent from civil society leadership roles.	Women are under-represented in civil society leadership positions.	Women are equitably represented as leaders and members of CS. .
3.5.2 Gender equitable practices within CSOs	How much do CSOs practice gender equity? What percentage of CSOs with paid employees have policies in place to ensure gender equity?	A small minority (less than 20%).	A minority (20%-50%)	A small majority (51% - 65%)	A large majority (more than 65%)
3.5.3 CS actions to promote gender equity	How much does CS actively promote gender equity at the societal level?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions actually contribute to gender inequity.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in promoting a gender equitable society. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
3.6. Poverty eradication	**To what extent do civil society actors promote poverty eradication?**				
3.6.1 CS actions to eradicate poverty	To what extent does CS actively seek to eradicate poverty?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions serve to sustain existing economic inequities.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in the struggle to eradicate poverty. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.

3.7. Environmental sustainability	**To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote environmental sustainability?**				
3.7.1 CS actions to sustain the environment	How much does CS actively seek to sustain the environment?	No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions serve to reinforce unsustainable practices.	Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	CS is a driving force in protecting the environment. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.

4. Impact

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
4.1. Influencing public policy	**How active and successful is civil society in influencing public policy?**				
4.1.1. Influencing public policy	How active and successful is civil society in influencing public policy?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.

4.2. Holding state & private corporations accountable	**How active and successful is civil society in holding the state and private corporations accountable?**				
4.2.1. Holding state accountable	How active and successful is civil society in monitoring state performance and holding the state accountable?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.2.2. Holding private corporations accountable	How active and successful is civil society in holding private corporations accountable?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.

4.3. Responding to social interests	**How much are civil society actors responding to social interests?**				
4.3.1 Responsiveness	How effectively do civil society actors respond to priority social concerns?	Civil society actors are out of touch with the crucial concerns of the population.	There are frequent examples of crucial social concerns that did not find a voice among existing civil society actors.	There are isolated examples of crucial social concerns that did not find a voice among existing civil society actors.	Civil society actors are very effective in taking up the crucial concerns of the population.
4.3.2 Public Trust	What percentage of the population has trust in civil society actors?	A small minority (< 25%)	A large minority (25% - 50%)	A small majority (51% – 75%)	A large majority (> 75%)

Indicator	Description	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
4.4. Empowering citizens	**How active and successful is civil society in empowering citizens, especially traditionally marginalised groups, to shape decisions that affect their lives?**				
4.4.1 Informing/ educating citizens	How active and successful is civil society in informing and educating citizens on public issues?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.4.2 Building capacity for collective action	How active and successful is civil society in building the capacity of people to organise themselves, mobilise resources and work together to solve common problems?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.4.3 Empowering marginalized people	How active and successful is civil society in empowering marginalized people?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.4.4. Empowering women	How active and successful is civil society in empowering women, i.e. to give them real choice and control over their lives?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.4.5. Building social capital	To what extent does civil society build social capital among its members? How do levels of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness of members of CS compare to those of non-members?	Civil society diminishes the stock of social capital in society.	Civil society does not contribute to building social capital in society.	Civil society does contribute moderately to building social capital in society.	Civil Society does contribute strongly to building social capital in society.
4.4.6 Supporting livelihoods	How active and successful is civil society in creating / supporting employment and/or income-generating opportunities (especially for poor people and women)?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.

4.5. Meeting societal needs	**How active and successful is civil society in meeting societal needs, especially those of poor people and other marginalised groups?**				
4.5.1 Lobbying for state service provision	How active and successful is civil society in lobbying the government to meet pressing societal needs?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.5.2 Meeting pressing societal needs directly	How active and successful is civil society in directly meeting pressing societal needs (through service delivery or the promotion of self-help initiatives)?	No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.
4.5.3 Meeting needs of marginalised groups	To what extent are CSOs more or less effective than the state in delivering services to marginalised groups?	CSOs are less effective than the state.	CSOs are as effective as the state.	CSOs are slightly more effective than the state.	CSOs are significantly more effective than the state.

Appendix 4:

Bibliography

Alpha Research Studies. (2000–2004) *CIA World Factbook* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.aresearch.org/>.

AIP. *Litigation under the Access to Public Information Act,* AIP. Available from: <www.aip-bg.org>.

Anheier, H.K. and Salamon, L. Volunteering in cross-national Perspective; Initial Comparisons, in: *Law & Contemp. Probs. 43 (Autumn 1999).*
Available from: <http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/lcp/articles/lcp62dAutumn1999p43.htm>.

Anheier, H.K. (2004) *Civil Society: Measurement, Evaluation, Policy*, London: Earthscan.

Balkan Assist. *Description of Balkan Assist's Projects* [Internet], Balkan Assist. Available from: <www.balkanassist.bg>.

Boshnakova D. and Zareva R.(2003) PR landscape [Internet].
Available from <www.globalpr.org/knowledge/businessguides/Profile_Bulgaria.pdf>.

Bratton, M. (1994) Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa. IDR Report 11, 6, Boston: Institute for Development Research.

Bulgarian National Statistical Institute Bulgarian National Statistical Institute. [Internet].
Available from:< http://www.nsi.bg/>.

CIA. (2004) *CIA World Factbook* [Internet].
Available from: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/ publications/ factbook/geos/bu.html>.

CIA. (2002) *CIA World Factbook* [Internet] Available from: <http://www.faqs.org/docs/ factbook/geos/bu.html>.

CIVICUS. (1997) *New Civic Atlas: Profiles of Civil Society in 60 Countries.* Washington, DC: CIVICUS.

CIVICUS. (2004) CIVICUS Civil Society Index Toolkit Implementation Phase 2003-05, unpublished document.

Coalition 2000. (2001) *Bulgaria Corruption Index Report for 2001* [Internet], Coalition 2000.
Available from: <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=2152>.

Coalition 2000. (2003) *Bulgaria Corruption Index Report for 2003* [Internet], Coalition 2000. Available from: <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=2152>.

Coalition 2000. *Corruption Indexes of Coalition 2000* [Internet], Coalition 2004. Available from: <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=2152> [Accessed March 2004].

European Commission. (2003) *Regular Report on Bulgaria's Progress toward Accession.* European Commission.

European Commission. (2004) *Regular Report on Bulgaria's Progress.* European Commission.

European Union. (2004) *Diagnostic Evaluation and Needs Assessment*. PHARE Civil Society Development Program.

Freedom House. (2004) *Freedom in the World 2004: Country Report*. Freedom House.

Heinrich, V.F. (2004) Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: A Project Description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index: A Participatory Needs Assessment and Action-Planning Tool for Civil Society. *CIVICUS Civil Society Index Paper Series,* vol. 2, issue 1, CIVICUS.

Heinrich, V.F. and Naidoo, K. (2001) From Impossibility to Reality: A Reflection and Position Paper on the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society Project 1999-2001 *CIVICUS Civil Society Index Paper Series,* vol. 1, issue 1. CIVICUS.

Holloway, R. (2001) *Using the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society as a Self Assessment Tool*, Washington, DC: CIVICUS.

Jefferson Center. (2002) The Citizen Jury Process. [Internet].
Available from: <http://www.jefferson-center.org/citizens_jury.htm>.

Kuiranov, D. (2004) Political Behaviour in the context of Social History, Centre for Liberal Strategy.

Mihaylov, D., et al. *Assessment of Municipal Administration and the Potential to Call on Local Communities*. Report on the 'Rural Area Development' Project run by BA/MAF.

Mihaylov, D., et al. (2003) *Legal Environment for Direct Democracy in Bulgaria*. Balkan Assist Association report

Mihaylov, D., et al. (2004) *Evaluation of Municipal Administration and Opportunities to Mobilise Local Communities: Project Report*. Rural Development Project of the World Bank and Bulgaria's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

—*Overview of Gender Equality Issues in Bulgaria*. (2003) [Internet], Association of Spread of Knowledge "Missal" Available from: <http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.lt/results/ bulgaria.htm>.

Putnam, R.D. (1993) *Making Democracy Work - Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

—Publication on Civil Society Formation (2004) *Centre for Liberal Strategy* [Internet].
Available from: <http://www.cls-sofia.org/publications/index-en.htm>.

Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe. [Internet] *Bulgaria – NGO Directory* Available from: <www.rec.org/REC/Publications/NGODirIntros/ Bulgaria.html>.

Transparency International. (2002) *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*. Transparency International.

Transparency International. (2004) *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*. Transparency International.

Trifonova, El. (2001) *Civil society–key element of post-cold war zeitgeist*. October 2001.

UNDP. (2004) *Evaluation of the Capacity of Municipalities and Regions to Utilize Funding from EU Structural and Cohesion Funds.* UNDP.

UNDP. (2004) *Assessment of Municipal and Regional Capacity for the Assimilation of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds*. UNDP.

UNDP. (2001) From Individuals to Citizens. In: *Human Development Report*. UNDP.

UNDP. General Information [Internet]. Chitalishta Project. Available from: <www.undp.bg>.

UNDP. 'JOBS' Programme; General Information. [Internet].Available from: <www.undp.bg>.

UNDP. (2003) *UNDP Millennium Development Goals 2003*. UNDP, Bulgaria.

UNDP. (2003) *Beyond the Trap of Dependence*. UNDP Regional Report, Bratislava.

USAID. (2001) *NGO Sustainability Index*. Washington, DC: USAID.

USAID. (2002) *NGO Sustainability Index*. Washington, DC: USAID.